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**From Pittsburgh to Pressburg: The Transatlantic
Slovak National Movement, 1880-1920**

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Date: 29 September 2017

Abstract

Between 1870 and 1920, half a million Slovak-speaking migrants left the Kingdom of Hungary for the United States of America. They represented one fifth of the world's Slovak-speaking population. During this mass, transatlantic Slovak migration, Slovak nationalism in Hungary was transformed from a fringe idea into a serious political goal. The resulting Slovak national movement helped create the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938), a state whose mostly Czech leaders pledged to support Slovak national rights. The multilingual region known as 'Upper Hungary' from which Slovak-speakers had left was given a new, ethnically-based name: Slovakia, which was imagined as a national, territorial homeland for Slovak-speakers, and still in existence today.

This critical period of change in Slovak nationalist thought has yet to be properly understood. This is because scholarship on Slovak nationalism in the new world has been artificially separated from research into Slovak nationalism in the old country. Although the role played by the emerging Slovak American community in campaigning for a Czecho-Slovak state during the First World War has been recognised, the wider significance of Slovak American political institutions, fraternal organisations and the Slovak migrant press in shaping Slovak nationalist activism has not. Historians of the Slovak-American community, on the other hand, have yet to influence debates on Slovak political nationalism. By combining two historiographical traditions that largely talk past one another, this study uncovers the transatlantic Slovak national movement that formed between nationalist leaders in Upper Hungary and the migrant colony in the United States. Based on extensive research in Slovak and Slovak-American archives in both the USA and Slovakia, this

dissertation demonstrates that a transatlantic Slovak political movement in the late nineteenth century brought about the creation of a Slovak national homeland in the twentieth.

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A Note on Terminology

In explaining the purpose of research in a part of east-central Europe to a general audience or to friends and family, the relative obscurity of regional geography and the language groups once spoken there has often been made clear. This study therefore uses, where possible, terms that are most familiar or accessible to a native English-speaker, so long as these terms do not significantly distort historical meaning. One hopefully uncontroversial use of this policy concerns the naming of historical actors. For the sake of clarity to English-language readers, this study refers to all politicians, journalists, priests or other figures in the Kingdom of Hungary using the ‘given name’ – ‘family name’ structure of the English language, rather than the ‘Eastern name structure’ used in the Magyar language, which places the family name before the given name. This study therefore refers to Magyar-speaking politicians such as ‘István Tisza’ and ‘Mihály Károlyi’ throughout, rather than in the opposite naming convention.

Place names pose a far more complex and politically sensitive problem. Within the multilingual Kingdom of Hungary, each town, city or county or other location typically possessed a different name in Slovak, Magyar, German and any other language widely spoken in the local area. Asserting the name of a town or other location in any of these languages alone has often implied a value judgment as to which national group that the area ‘belonged to’ in the past. Even the listing of all the names for a given territory has been subject to nationalist dispute, over the ranking of their own language on that list. The aim of this study is not to assert nationalist ownership of a given

territory, but to simply provide greater clarity to an English-language reader. As most of the cities, towns, counties and other geographical features in what was then northern Hungary will be found on a present-day map of ‘Slovakia’, in the Slovak language form, this thesis will use the Slovak-language term to commonly refer to these places. Where historical locations can be located within present-day Hungary, the Magyar-language term will be used instead. This approach has the distinct benefit of allowing readers to easily refer to these locations on a present-day map or atlas. In every case, however, a place introduced to the reader for the first time will be described in each of the chief languages by which it was known. For locations in present-day Slovakia, these terms will be provided in Slovak/Magyar form: the preference given to Slovak, as it will be by this term that the location will then be referred to for the remainder of the study. The reverse form will apply to locations in present-day Hungary. Where a significant German-speaking population also existed – for example, the so-called ‘Zipser Germans’ or ‘Zipser Saxons’ of north-eastern Hungary – then the German-language term will also be provided. For example, the Hungarian county from which these ‘Zipser Germans’ got their name will be introduced to the reader in the form ‘Spiš/Szepes/Zips’: the name of the country in the Slovak, Magyar and German languages respectively. Where a place possesses a relatively well-known name in the English language, that name is used in place of the national language: ‘Vienna’ rather than ‘Wien; ‘Prague’ rather than ‘Praha’. The same policy is used in the case of ‘Pressburg’ in Slovakia until 1919: the renaming of that city as ‘Bratislava’ by the new Czechoslovak regime will also be highlighted to the reader as a symbolically important historical event.

The final issues of terminology centre on the imprecise way by which the English language distinguishes between statehood, language and nationality in east-

central Europe. The terms ‘Hungarian’ and ‘Magyar’ are used interchangeably in English to describe the language known as *magyar* or *magyar nyelv* – the official language of present-day state of Hungary. The term ‘Magyar’ is preferred to ‘Hungarian’ in this study to describe language use, in order to distinguish between the descriptive term ‘Magyar-speaker’ from the status of ‘Hungarian’ political identity and citizenship, which could be held by any of the Kingdom of Hungary’s multilingual groups. While nearly all Magyar-speakers were also ‘Hungarian’, many Hungarians (and most of the population throughout the nineteenth century) were not Magyar-speakers. On the same grounds, this study also uses the term ‘Magyar’ to describe the dominant form of political nationalism in Hungary after 1867. While this political movement has often been described in English-language works as ‘Hungarian’ instead, the central importance of the Magyar language to this form of nationalism – within a much larger, multilingual population in Hungary – makes the term ‘Hungarian’ inaccurate, if not misleading. This study therefore uses the term ‘Magyar’ to describe specific language use, the nationalist movement based on the Magyar language and some of its more overt policies, such as the ‘Magyarisation’ of non-Magyar speaking Hungarians. ‘Hungarian’ is used to describe the state institutions of the Kingdom of Hungary, such as its parliament, to describe ideas such as citizenship and to describe that state in international affairs.

In addition, this study follows the practice of recent historians of the Habsburg Empire, most prominently Pieter Judson, in favouring descriptive terms rather than the ‘normative terms’ that imply a degree of national identity.¹ This study will refer to most of its historical actors as ‘Slovak-speakers’ rather than ‘Slovaks’ as an implied, national

¹ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016, p. ix.

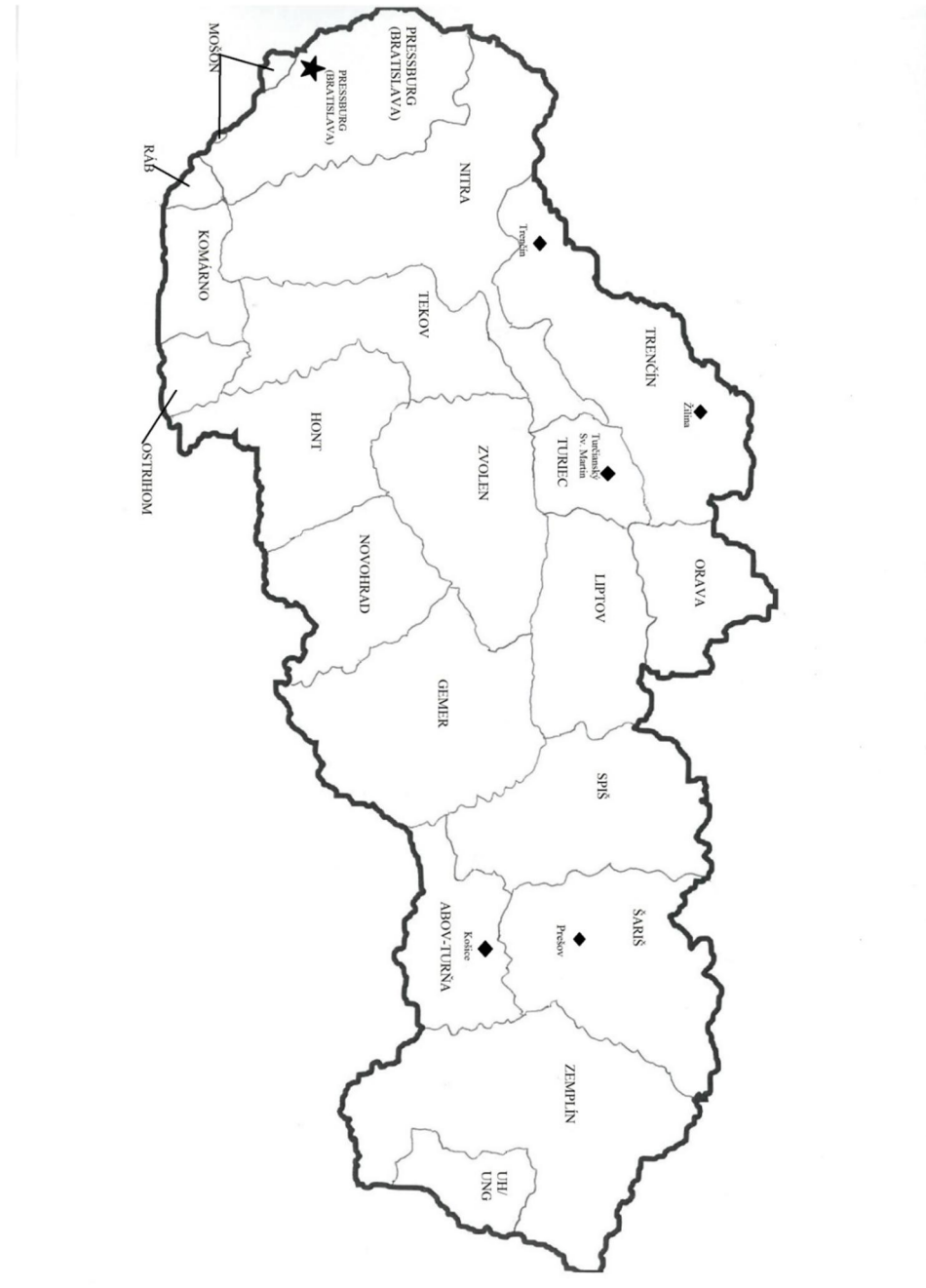
group, existing either in Hungary or later in the United States of America. The same terminology will apply, where appropriate, to ‘Magyar-speakers’, ‘German-speakers’ and other groups whose everyday language use typically did not imply a sense of collective nationhood. Even the term ‘Slovak-speaker’ obscures the extent to which the Kingdom of Hungary was a multilingual polity, where people commonly had some knowledge of multiple languages. It also underplays the potentially significant distinction between various ‘dialect forms’ and the supposedly ‘national’, standardised language. It is used here however to minimise the importance of language use as a marker for nationality, that the alternative term of ‘Slovak’ necessarily implies.

This study uses two related but distinct terms in describing the features of Slovak-speaking migration to the United States. The hyphenated form ‘Slovak-American’ is used to refer to the resident population (and institutions) in the United States with Slovak origins in terms of birth, language or heritage: a community that survives to the present day. Its use is intended to be comparable to similar terms such as ‘Irish-American’ or ‘Italian-American’ – that imply established residence (and citizenship) in the United States, while recognising a distinct, ethnic or national heritage. The broad historiography on how Slovak-speaking migrants integrated into American society and public life is therefore described in this study as ‘Slovak-American’.ⁱⁱ In contrast, this study uses the unhyphenated form ‘Slovak American’ as a descriptive term for Slovak-speakers (as well as institutions) that were not necessarily an established or permanent feature in the United States. For example, Slovak-speaking migrants often did not apply for United States’ citizenship but rather returned to Upper

ⁱⁱ This ‘hyphen-American’ form was in regular use in the United States in the period of this study and was attacked by critics such as Theodore Roosevelt during the First World War for suggesting potential disloyalty to American foreign policy. See J. G. Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. 2004, p. 16-19.

Hungary after a few years of work – this study therefore refers to ‘Slovak American migrants’ to describe this group without implying established residency in the United States or a dual identity. As this study will also show, many of the key institutions within the Slovak migrant colony took on a transatlantic form rather than focusing on the internal affairs of Slovak-speakers living in the United States. The Slovak-language press and fraternal organisations established in the United States are therefore referred to as ‘Slovak American’ to describe where this publication or society was based – their interests and influence also extended however to Upper Hungary.

Illustration A: Map of the territory of Slovakia, (from 1918), Including former county borders within the Kingdom of Hungary



Chapter 1: The Need for a Transatlantic Approach

Slovak political nationalism was largely a product of the twentieth century rather than a timeless ideology. The idea that the speakers of a Slovak language formed a nation - and that this linguistically-defined Slovak nation ought to possess guaranteed cultural and political rights - had very few adherents in the nineteenth century Kingdom of Hungary. There were barely a thousand or so Slovak nationalist intellectuals who acted as the self-declared representatives of the estimated two million Slovak-speakers living in the multinational Kingdom of Hungary: a territory that formed an internally autonomous part of the Habsburg Empire.¹ The leading Slovak nationalist cultural organisation, known as the *Matica Slovenská*, had a membership roll of just 984 members in its inaugural year in 1863 - a total that a later commentator described as ‘practically including every Slovak of note’ who held nationalist sentiments.² R. W. Seton-Watson, a contemporary political commentator whose travels highlighted the cause of the Slovak

¹ The 1910 census in Hungary recorded 1.68 million Slovak speakers living in the territory comprising the modern-day Slovak Republic. A significant settler colony of Slovaks lived in the so-called Banat and Bačka regions of southern Hungary (much of which comprises the province of Vojvodina in current-day Serbia), that accounted for a further 270,000 Slovak-speakers in Hungary. The total of Slovak-speakers living in the capital city of Budapest is difficult to determine precisely, in part due to their rate of assimilation and adoption of the Magyar language, but certainly ran into the tens of thousands. The 1910 Hungarian census figures were determined by a census question that nominally registered the “mother tongue” of the respondent. As Pieter Judson points out however, Hungarian census officials provided a description of the “mother tongue” question that pointed respondents to state the language that “the respondent considers his own and which he speaks most fluently and freely”. The census records essentially indicated a respondent’s ‘language of everyday use’ rather than literally documenting maternal language. The results of the 1910 census were consequently contested by Slovak nationalists. A preliminary census conducted by Czechoslovak officials in 1919 recorded 1.94 million Slovaks in the new territory of Slovakia, using a question that asked respondents to indicate their ethnicity. A. Špiesz and D. Čaplovič, *Illustrated Slovak History: A Struggle for Sovereignty in Central Europe*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2006, p. 174; P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016, p. 309; Slovak Republic, Bratislava, Ministerstvo Vnútra Slovenskej Republiky [MVSR], Slovenský Národný Archív [SNA], Osobný Fond [O. F.] Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 605, poč. č. 15 f. +1a., ‘Prejav Vavra Šrobára na schôdzu slovenských županov a delegátov v Košiciach, 15 novembra 1919’, Košice, 15 Nov. 1919, 33-34/78/3.

² T. Čapek, *The Slovaks of Hungary, Slavs and Pan Slavism*, New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906, p. 92.

nationalists to the English-speaking world, judged Slovak nationalism to have a no larger sum of dedicated activists some half a century later.³ This small core of Slovak nationalists consisted of teachers, lawyers, bank officials, doctors, pastors and priests, whose writings, organisation of Slovak political and social organisations, election campaigning and participation in public demonstrations formed the basis of Slovak nationalist activity in Hungary before the First World War. Despite being a small and largely powerless minority national movement in Hungarian politics, by 1920 the somewhat limited political goals of these nineteenth century nationalists for Slovak language rights to be guaranteed within a Slovak national homeland were largely fulfilled. Through the same process, a broader set of Slovak nationalist political demands were also established that framed the relationship between Slovak nationalists and the larger state system of central and eastern Europe during the rest of the twentieth century.

The attempts to satisfy this Slovak nationalist political programme played an important role in reshaping the territorial map of central and eastern Europe. The principle of Slovak ‘national self-determination’ formed an important justification for the creation of the state of Czechoslovakia in 1918. Czechoslovak leaders claimed to uphold this right within their larger multinational state, that became an important part of the central European state system after the First World War. A new territory was established within the Czechoslovak state and given the ethnically-designated name of ‘Slovakia’ (see Illustration A) that encompassed the bulk of the Slovak-speaking

³ R. W. Seton-Watson, *The New Slovakia*, Prague: F. R. Borový, 1924, p. 14. In 1910 a Slovak nationalist newspaper reported for example that the Slovak Museum Society - one of the few Slovak institutions in Hungary - had just 659 members supporting its activities. See *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, Pressburg, 5 Aug. 1910, p. 1.

population within its borders, as well as roughly one million non-Slovak speakers.⁴ The Slovak language became the chief language of government administration, the courts and the education system in the new 'Slovakia'; Slovak also acted alongside Czech as an interchangeable 'Czechoslovak' state language in the interwar state.⁵ Even cities were renamed under the new regime in order to strengthen the claim of the 'Slovak nation' to the territory. The predominantly German-speaking city of Pressburg,⁶ the largest settlement in Slovakia, was renamed 'Bratislava' in 1919 and served as the administrative seat of government - a name and status that it has held to the present day.⁷ In these ways, Slovak nationalism developed into a crucial political feature of the Czechoslovak state, and by extension was factored into the unstable international state system formed after the First World War.

The role played by Slovak nationalism in creating a designated national homeland and multinational state in place of the Kingdom of Hungary and centuries-long rule of the Habsburg dynasty over central Europe should not be taken for granted. Given the evident weakness of Slovak nationalist sentiment – a trait widely described as 'national consciousness' - beyond a small group of dedicated, Slovak nationalist

⁴ A preliminary census conducted by Czechoslovak officials in 1919 determined that there were one million non-Slovak speakers living in the new territory of 'Slovakia'. By far the largest of these minority groups were Magyar-speakers, more than 600,000 of which lived in Slovakia - accounting for nearly one quarter of the territory's population. 'Prejav Vavra Šrobára v Košiciach', 36/78/3.

⁵ The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic, ratified in February 1920, declared 'Czechoslovak' to be the 'state, official language'. The Czech and Slovak languages were and are mutually intelligible, but the question of which language ought to be used in the state administration was determined by a territorial division. The Constitution declared that the Czech language would be used 'regularly' (in the strict sense of 'as a rule') in Czechoslovak state administration in the territories of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, as well as the small territories of the new state that had formerly been governed by Imperial Germany. The Constitution decreed that state administration in Slovakia would be conducted 'regularly' in the Slovak language. See J. Koetzl and V. Joachim (eds.), *The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic*, Prague: Édition de la Société l'effort de la tchécoslovaquie, 1920, p. 47, p. 49; O. V. Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938: Education and the Making of a Nation*, Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1985, p. 91.

⁶ The Slovak name for the settlement was *Prešporok*, and the Magyar equivalent *Poszony*. See P. C. van Duin, *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, p. xi.

⁷ M. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2001, p. 156-157; van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 318.

activists in late nineteenth century Hungary, it was quite possible that the idea of Slovak nationhood could have remained an insignificant feature of Hungarian politics or international affairs. The bulk of the two million Slovak-speakers could have assimilated under the influence of the prevailing political current within the Kingdom of Hungary, where successive governments before the First World War promoted the Magyar language as a unifying, ‘national’ language for their polyglot state.⁸ Indeed, an estimated one-fifth of Slovak-speakers chose to assimilate in the last decades of Hungarian rule before 1918, with many of them doing so to secure the social and economic opportunities offered by white-collar jobs in the state bureaucracy, railways, the professions and teaching.⁹ In these roles mastering the Magyar language, supporting Magyar nationalist political parties and even adopting a ‘Magyarised’ name became increasingly vital for both the employment and career progression of non-Magyar speaking employees.¹⁰ Alternatively, Slovak-speakers could have remained a distinct but marginalised, minority language group, living within the borders of a larger multinational state. Slovak nationalists typically did not seek independent Slovak statehood but rather looked to secure their demands within a larger political unit: an outlook which meant that achieving their nationalist objectives depended on a degree of successful cooperation between Slovak nationalists and the political elite of a larger state. If the small elite group of Slovak nationalists operated within a state that either denied them meaningful political influence or legal rights to protect Slovak cultural projects and institutions, then their prospects of generating a sense of common Slovak

⁸ A. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 111; O. Jászai, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1929, p. 320; L. Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 283, p. 292.

⁹ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, p. 127.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

nationhood among the broader population would have been bleak. Explaining why Slovak nationalism did not ‘fail’ in these ways - as many of its leading protagonists would have understood it - but rather developed from its modest origins into a movement that repeatedly changed the political map of Europe during the twentieth century is the aim of this study.

Existing historical studies on the development of Slovak political nationalism have typically focused on the relationship between the Slovak nationalist leadership in Europe and the larger state authority under which most Slovak-speakers lived. The political struggle between the Slovak National Party and rival political parties and the governing administration of the Kingdom of Hungary has formed a major topic in this field, particularly in the period after the Hungarian state gained autonomy in its internal political affairs as part of the ‘Austro-Hungarian Compromise’ or *Ausgleich* of 1867.¹¹ This aspect of Slovak nationalism was accounted for at the time through works such as R. W. Seton-Watson’s *Racial Problems in Hungary*, published in 1908, as well as by several works of part-history and memoir produced by leading Slovak nationalists during the interwar period to account for the creation of the Czechoslovak state.¹²

¹¹ The Compromise (*Kiegyezés* in Magyar; *Rakúsko-uhorské vyrovnanie* in Slovak) established the Kingdom of Hungary as largely autonomous unit within the Habsburg imperial domains, possessing its own Parliament in Budapest and administration with a wide range of powers. Emperor Franz Josef I and his imperial court at Vienna retained however control of the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary as well as its combined military forces. R. A. Kann, *The Habsburg Empire: A Study In Integration And Disintegration*, New York: Octagon Books, 1979, p. 80-81; Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, p. 90; E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987, p. 145.

¹² R.W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, London: Archibald and Constable, 1908; R.W. Seton-Watson, *The New Slovakia*, Prague: F. R. Borový, 1924; R.W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks*, London: Hutchinson and Co., 1943; ‘Dr. Vacovský’ [Milan Ivanka], *Slováci a Maďari: Politicko-Historická Úvaha*, Pittsburgh: Tlačou Slovenského Hlasníku, 1914; A. Štefánek, *Slovensko pred prevratom a počas prevratu*, Prague: Památník odboje, 1923; I. Dérer, *Slovensko v prevrate a po ňom*, Bratislava/Prague: Grafické, knihařské a nakladatelské družstvo, 1924; I. Markovič, *Slovensko pred prevratom*, Bratislava/Prague: Grafické, knihařské a nakladatelské družstvo, 1924; A. Štefánek, *Slovensko pred prevratom a počas prevratu*, Prague: Památník odboje, 1923; V. Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko: Pamäti z Rokov, 1918-1920*, Vol. I, Prague: Čin, 1928; K. Medvecký, *Slovenský prevrat*, (Vols. I-IV), Trnava: Spolok svätého Vojtecha, 1930.

Extensive monographs and articles on aspects of Slovak political nationalism have refined our understanding of the ‘constitutional struggles’ that took place not only between Slovak nationalists and the Hungarian state, but also with the Czechoslovak authorities in the immediate aftermath of the First World War.¹³ Works such as James Felak’s study of the interwar Slovak People’s Party and James Mace Ward’s political biography of Jozef Tiso, leader of the independent, Slovak state during the Second World War, have significantly contributed to our understanding of the radical wing of Slovak nationalist politics in the interwar period.¹⁴ These works have also shown how certain features of this form of Slovak nationalism - such as its novel combination of the non-denominational ideas of Slovak nationhood with political Catholicism – emerged in the context of Hungarian society before the First World War. Due to the small number and enhanced importance of Slovak leaders in maintaining their nationalist political movement and determining its specific course, their published correspondence as well as works of historical biography have retained an important place in the historiography of Slovak political nationalism from the Second World War onwards.¹⁵ Significant contributions to this field include a valuable, collected work on the career and flexible

¹³ F. Bokeš, *Vývin predstáv o slovenskom území v 19. storočí*, Martin: Maticá Slovenská, 1945; J. Mésároš, *Roľnícka a národnostná otázka na Slovensku, 1848-1900*, Bratislava: Osveta, 1959; M. Podrimavský, *Slovenská národná strana v druhej polovici XIX. storočia*, Bratislava: VEDA, 1983; O. V. Johnson, ‘Losing Faith: The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle, 1906-1914’, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*; 22 (Jan. 1998), pp. 293-312; R. Holec, ‘The Černová Tragedy and the Origin of Czechoslovakia in the Changes of Historical Memory’, in D. Kováč (ed.), *Slovak Contributions to the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000; I. Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism and National Identity, 1918-1920: Manifestations of the National Identity of Slovaks*, Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1999; M. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2001; N. Krajčovičová, *Slovensko na ceste k demokracii*, Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV, 2009.

¹⁴ J. R. Felak, *‘At the Price of the Republic’: Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party, 1929-1938*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993; J. M. Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013.

¹⁵ E. Gombala, *Viliam Paulíny-Tóth*, Martin: Maticá Slovenská, 1976; P. Petrus (ed.), *Korešpondencia Svetozára Hurbana Vajanského*, (Vols. I-III), Bratislava: Slovenská Akadémia Vied, 1967, 1972, 1978; M. Kocák (ed.), *Listy Jozefa Škulítyho*, (Vols. I and II), Martin: Maticá Slovenská, 1982, 1983; A. Bartlová, *Andrej Hlinka*, Bratislava: Obzor, 1991.

political strategies of the Slovak statesman Milan Hodža, as well as controversial political figures like the pro-Czechoslovak politician and minister Vavro Šrobár.¹⁶ Meanwhile public demonstrations, violent clashes between the police and Slovak-speaking crowds, political prosecutions of Slovak nationalists by the Hungarian state and other forms of nationalist conflict in Upper Hungary typically form the central set-piece moments within broader syntheses of ‘Slovak national history’ - a genre that has understandably acquired greater prominence and considerable historical revision since Slovakia became an independent state in 1993.¹⁷

A more substantial revisionist turn in Slovak historiography has also occurred in recent decades, that has stressed the fluid and contingent nature of Slovak nationhood into the twentieth century. Owen Johnson’s study of the education system in interwar Slovakia concluded that ‘the policy of the new Czechoslovak government [...] especially in the field of education, led to the triumph of the Slovak nationality’ in Slovakia during the interwar period.¹⁸ Johnson argued that the promotion of Slovak as a literary language after 1918 helped to create a sizable Slovak intelligentsia within the territory, that ‘shared a common outlook’.¹⁹ In this analysis, a broad-based Slovak national movement followed, rather than was carried into, the creation of the Czechoslovak state and stemmed in part from the direct policies of the interwar Prague government. The

¹⁶ M. Pekník (ed.), *Milan Hodža: Statesman and Politician*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2007; J. Baer, *A Life Dedicated to the Republic: Vavro Šrobár’s Czechoslovakism*, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2014.

¹⁷ Of these works, Elena Mannová’s edited volume is the most valuable resource for English-language study. See E. Mannová, (ed.), *A Concise History of Slovakia*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000. Other works that set out the ‘national history’ of Slovakia include: S. J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*, New York: St Martin’s Press, 1995; J. Bartl et. al., (trans. D. P. Daniel), *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2002; K. Henderson, *Slovakia: The Escape From Invisibility*, London: Routledge, 2002; A. Špiesz, and D. Čaplovič, *Illustrated Slovak History: A Struggle For Sovereignty in Central Europe*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2006.

¹⁸ O. V. Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938: Education and the Making of a Nation*, Boulder: East European Monographs, 1985, p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

fundamental linguistic and political foundations of Slovak nationalism have also been challenged by Alexander Maxwell, whose work has demonstrated the contingent basis by which both a standardised, Slovak ‘national’ language and a ‘Slovak’ political identity distinct from Hungarian patriotism were formed during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Maxwell has argued that the competing claims of nationalist intellectuals to forms of Slovak, Czechoslovak or Slavic linguistic nationhood in Hungary should be interpreted as a cultural expression that remained distinct from political loyalty to the Hungarian state.²⁰ The degree of ‘multiple and simultaneous national loyalties’, as expressed by many Slovak intellectuals before the First World War, challenges the assumption that the pursuit of national rights is necessarily linked to the attempt to create a political nation-state.²¹

The historiography of Slovak nationalism is still in its relative infancy and there remain substantial ‘blank spaces’ within the field for historians to fill. There are relatively few works of English-language scholarship on the topic compared to the more extensive treatment of nationalist conflicts in the neighbouring territory of Habsburg Austria.²² Local and regional histories within the territory of modern-day Slovakia have also been broadly neglected, although Pieter van Duin’s work on the multinational city of Pressburg suggests that there would be considerable value in taking this approach.²³ As the historiography of Slovak nationalism develops, it is also necessary to revise the

²⁰ A. M. Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia: Slavic Hungary, the Czechoslovak Language and Accidental Nationalism*, London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009, p. 106-7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²² See for example G. B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981; D. Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998; J. King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002; N. M. Wingfield (ed.), *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2003.

²³ P. C. van Duin, *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009.

existing focus on the high political conflict between Slovak nationalists and successive Hungarian and Czechoslovak regimes in the decades before and in the immediate aftermath of the First World War. While the political activity of the Slovak National Party and factions of the broader, Slovak national movement were undoubtedly an important feature of the period, they cannot fully account for the development of Slovak political nationalism. Indeed, any account of Slovak nationalism that conceives of the movement as inherently part of the domestic politics of the Hungarian state cannot account for the decisive change of political orientation by which Slovak nationalists backed the dissolution of the Kingdom of Hungary and the joining of ‘Slovakia’ to a Czechoslovak state in 1918. The relevance of Slovak nationalist claims to this wider process by which Austria-Hungary was dissolved and putative ‘nation-states’ emerged in its place was not established primarily by the small group of Slovak nationalist activists in Hungary, but rather by the transnational and transatlantic nature of Slovak nationalist campaigning in the early twentieth century. This feature was critical in creating a Slovak national homeland and placing of Slovak nationalist claims within the interwar state system, yet represents a poorly understood feature in the historiography of Slovak nationalism.

A key weakness of the existing historiography is that it has largely focused on the development of Slovak political nationalism within the territory of the modern-day Slovak Republic. Slovakia today broadly corresponds to a region known as ‘Upper Hungary’ within the Hungarian state before 1918.²⁴ Upper Hungary was a loosely

²⁴ The region of Upper Hungary also extended east beyond the current international border between Slovakia and Ukraine, including territory that was known as ‘Subcarpathian Ruthenia’ and governed by the Czechoslovak state between 1918 and 1939. That section of Upper Hungary now forms the ‘Zakarpattia’ region in western Ukraine. In this study, however, ‘Upper Hungary’ will be used to refer to the territory that after 1918 became ‘Slovakia’ within the Czechoslovak state, and from 1993 the independent Slovak Republic.

defined region that consisted of the northern counties of the Kingdom of Hungary as well as the most mountainous terrain in the country. The Magyar-language term for the region was *Felvidék*, best translated into English as ‘Uplands’ and suggests that Upper Hungary held a similar place in the mental geography of Hungarians as the Scottish ‘Highlands’ held within the United Kingdom or other peripheral regions of larger states.²⁵ It was in this highland territory of Upper Hungary that the vast majority of Slovak-speakers were born or lived during the nineteenth century and where the central base of the Slovak National Party was situated from its establishment in the 1860s.²⁶ Yet the activity of Slovak nationalists was not restricted to Upper Hungary, for there were no defined territorial boundaries between the region and the rest of the Hungarian kingdom. A substantial colony of Slovak-speakers also existed in ‘Lower Hungary’ - an area that now mostly forms the region of Vojvodina in modern-day Serbia - as part of the area’s repopulation when the Habsburg state won territory from the Ottoman Empire in its military campaigns of the eighteenth century.²⁷ These Slovaks of Lower Hungary represented an important electoral constituency for Slovak nationalist politicians within Hungary, twice electing Slovak nationalist candidates to the Hungarian Parliament before the First World War, including the prominent Slovak politician and later Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, Milan Hodža, in 1905.²⁸ While the study of Slovak nationalist politics in ‘Lower Hungary’ has been maintained by some specialist works in the Slovak language, it has been neglected in broader accounts of the Slovak nationalist movement and is largely entirely unremarked upon in the English-language

²⁵ P. G. Glockner and N. V. Bagossy, *Encyclopedia Hungarica*, Vol I., Calgary: Hungarian Ethnic Lexicon Foundation, p. 554.

²⁶ Johnson, *Slovakia, 1918-1938*, p. 42.

²⁷ E. Mannová (ed.), *A Concise History of Slovakia*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000, p. 189.

²⁸ A. Kopčok, ‘Milan Hodza and the Lowland Slovaks’, in M. Pekník, (ed.), *Milan Hodža: Statesman and Politician*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2007, p. 79, p. 83-84; J. Tkáč, ‘Národno-Politické Hnutie Slovákov v Dolnej Zemi’, in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 28, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2011, p. 24-25.

scholarship.²⁹ Slovak-speaking migrants also flocked in their tens of thousands to expanding cities such as Budapest, as well as the imperial capital of Vienna throughout the nineteenth century.³⁰ The existence of these Slovak-speaking ‘settler colonies’ and ‘migrant communities’ across Hungary, in Vienna as well as a small Slovak-speaking student population in Prague meant that Slovak nationalist activism was not restricted to Upper Hungary in the second half of the nineteenth century.³¹ The current historiography of Slovak nationalism has treated these transnational elements of Slovak nationalism as a minor feature, compared to conflicts that took place between the Slovak nationalist leadership and the Hungarian and later Czechoslovak authorities in the modern-day territory of Slovakia. By instead adopting the transnational nature of Slovak political nationalism as the basis for investigation, this study seeks to offer new insights on its historical development. It is hoped that this approach will complement some of the more innovative historical scholarship on the Slovak nationalist movement within Upper Hungary, by placing the development of Slovak nationalism there in the wider, transnational context of the Slovak national movement that developed at the turn of the twentieth century.

The most significant transnational aspect of Slovak nationalism involved the mass migration of Slovak-speaking workers to the United States of America. In the period of two generations before the First World War, an estimated half a million Slovak-speakers became established in the United States, forming a community that

²⁹ The journal *Slováci v Zahraníčí* (Slovaks Abroad), has been published annually by the Matica Slovenská organisation in Martin, Slovakia, and provides a collection of biographies and small monograph articles on Slovaks in Lower Hungary as well as migrants to the United States and other countries.

³⁰ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 12; van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 120.

³¹ E. Bosák, ‘Czech-Slovak Relations and the Student Organisation Detvan, 1882-1914’, in S. J. Kirschbaum (ed.), *Slovak Politics: Essays on Slovak History in Honour of Joseph M. Kirschbaum*, Cleveland, OH: Slovak Institute, 1983, pp. 7-35.

represented around one-fifth of the global Slovak-speaking population.³² The leadership that emerged within this new Slovak ‘colony’ in the United States established a series of organisations and institutions to cater for the needs of the migrant community. Historians of Slovak nationalism have typically acknowledged that Slovak-speaking migration to the United States played a role in the development of this political movement but have not subjected the migrant colony to more detailed scrutiny. In one recent work, for example, the historians Marián Hronský and Miroslav Pekník characterise the Slovak-American community as one that ‘owing to their more developed economic life and democratic freedoms, had constituted themselves as a modern nation prior to Slovaks [doing so] in Hungary’.³³ These historians argue that the growth of Slovak ‘national consciousness’, achieved within the multi-ethnic, ‘melting-pot’ environment of the United States, suitably explains why Slovak American activists ‘overtook the programme and goals of Slovak politicians in the homeland’.³⁴ It does not necessarily follow however that the liberty enjoyed by Slovak migrants in the United States would compel them to conduct a significant nationalist campaign on behalf of co-nationals living thousands of miles away in Upper Hungary. The existing historiography assumes that a growth in Slovak ‘national consciousness’ among Slovak-speaking migrants led to their support for a more radical political platform than that adopted by the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary: that these migrants became in effect ‘more nationalist’ than the Slovak political leadership in their homeland. The relationship between Slovak nationalism and Slovak migrants to the United States has

³² M. M. Stolárik, ‘Slovak Immigrants Come to Terms With Religious Diversity in North America’, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96: 1 (Jan. 2010), p. 56-57; V. S. Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America, 1914-1918*, Washington D.C.: Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Science in America, 1976, p. 5-6. Mannová, *Slovakia*, p. 191.

³³ M. Hronský and M. Pekník, *Martinská deklarácia: cesta slovenskej politiky k vzniku Česko-Slovenska*, Bratislava, VEDA, 2008, p. 47-48.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

been largely read backwards: with the demonstrable influence of the Slovak American colony in nationalist political life during the 1900s and 1910s assumed to have been the inevitable outcome of mass migration. As this study will show however, the key institutions of this migrant colony were not established because of a widely held sense of Slovak nationhood or to serve a politically nationalist cause: they had to be consciously turned into centres for nationalist activism over an extended period of time. By investigating this process, this study shows that the participation of Slovak-speaking migrants in their national movement cannot be taken for granted as the existing historiography on Slovak nationalism so often asserts. The emergence of the Slovak-speaking colony in the United States as a second centre of Slovak nationalist agitation, that complemented the existing centre of the national movement in Upper Hungary, was a contingent outcome of the migration experience that relied on the decisive influence of a handful of Slovak nationalist leaders within that community. Slovak nationalism became a more potent political idea as a transatlantic movement, and it is therefore necessary to critically assess the history of Slovak-speaking migrants living in the United States as a central feature in the history of Slovak nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century.

The existing historiography of the ‘Slovak-American’ community in the United States offers a contribution that historians of Slovak political nationalism have mostly neglected. Slovak historians have tended to study this migrant colony in the form of largely biographical accounts and a few thematic articles published in a journal series on ‘Slovaks Abroad’.³⁵ A series of collected articles on the topic of Slovak migration to the

³⁵ R. Korbaš, ‘Peter Vítázoslav Rovnianek’, in S. Bajaník and V. Dund’urová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 27, 2010, pp. 114-122; H. Palkovičová, ‘Ivan Bielek a Slovenská Liga v Amerike’, in Bajaník and Dund’urová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 28, 2011, pp. 10-18; F. Vrábek, ‘Zo Života Slovenských Vystažovalcov do U.S.A. pred Prvou Svetovou Vojnou’, in D.

rest of the world, as well as an important series of published sources on Slovak emigration was compiled by a group of Slovak historians more than thirty years ago.³⁶ While these works form an important foundation for any study of the migrant colony, the relationship between Slovak-speakers living in the United States and the nationalist movement in Upper Hungary has not been given sufficient attention. Konštantín Čulen's *History of the Slovaks in America*, published in 1942 and subject to recent English-language translation, remains the most significant contribution on this topic to date.³⁷ Čulen was a historian within the *Matica Slovenská* cultural institute in interwar Slovakia. As part of that organisation, Čulen was a member of a four-man *Matica* delegation in the mid-1930s that conducted a lecture tour on Slovak art, culture, folklore and history to various Slovak-American communities, as well as gathering source material from Slovak American fraternal organisations, newspapers and political organisations.³⁸ While a considerable amount of this material has been retained by the

Zemančík and Z. Pavelcová (eds.) *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 30, 2013, pp. 215-34; F. Vrábek, 'Jozef Murgaš a Československá milióndolárová zbierka a otázka zamestnania', in Z. Pavelcová (ed.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 31, 2015, pp. 32-38; Z. Pavelcová, 'V Spomienkach na Život a Dielo Ignáca Gessaya (1874-1928)', in Z. Pavelcová (ed.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 31, 2015, pp. 39-50. For articles on wider themes of Slovak American history, see L. Tajták, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Národné Hnutie do Rozpadu Monarchie', in Bajaník and Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 25, 2008, pp. 22-34; Š. Kucík, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie po vzniku Česko-slovenska (1918-1920)', in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 27, pp. 80-89; M. Majeriková-Molitoris, 'Americkí Slováci v Boji za Národné Práva Slovákov na Severnom Spiši a Hornej Orave', in Zemančík and Pavelcová (eds.) *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 29, pp. 96-105; C. Baláž, 'Československá Vystahovateľská Politika v Rokoch 1918-1939', in Zemančík and Pavelcová (eds.) *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 30, pp. 51-67; C. Baláž, 'Účasť Amerických Slovákov na Zahraničnom Odboji v Prvej Svetovej Vojne', in *Ibid.*, pp. 96-107.

³⁶ F. Bielik and E. Rákoš (eds.), *Slovenské výstahovateľstvo: Dokumenty; Korešpondencia*, Vols. I-IV, Martin: SAV/Matica Slovenská, 1969-1985; F. Bielik et. al. *Slováci vo Svete II*, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 1980; J. Sirácky et. al., *Slováci vo Svete I*, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 1980; Matica Slovenská, *Vystahovateľstvo a život krajanov vo svete: k storočnici začiatkov masového vystahovateľstva slovenského ľudu do zámoria*, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 1982.

³⁷ K. Čulen (trans. D. C. Necas), *History of Slovaks in America*, St. Paul, MN: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007.

³⁸ Slovak Republic, Martin, MVSR, Archív Matice Slovenskej [AMS], Fond Kultúrny a Spolkový Život Slovákov v U.S.A: v rokoch 1895, 1902-1939, 1945, 1947, 1950 [AMS, Fond KSZ], č. šk. 9, inv. č. 98, porad. č. 263, 'Úryvky z dejín Slovákov z oblasti Braddockej, brožúru zo stavená C. M. Merešom', 15-16 Mar. 1936, f. 11, f. 17.

Matica Slovenská archives in Martin, Čulen also had access to sources that were lost during the collapse of the independent Slovak state in 1944-45 and the flight of many Slovak nationalist intellectuals - including Čulen himself - to the West. This fact makes Čulen's work itself a valuable historical resource.

While Čulen's research focused on the internal history of the Slovak-speaking migrant colony, his perspective as a Slovak nationalist during the turbulent late years of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic led Čulen to seek the 'contribution' made by Slovaks living in the United States to the rise of Slovak political nationalism.³⁹ Čulen was the editor of *Slovák*, the newspaper published by the autonomist Slovak People's Party from 1926 and held brief posts in both the autonomous Slovak Diet (1938-1939) and the wartime Slovak state.⁴⁰ Čulen's work frequently contrasts the development of Slovak migrant organisations in the United States with the political, social and economic situation of Slovaks living in the Kingdom of Hungary to explain how Slovak nationalist strength developed by the middle decades of the twentieth century. The influence of Čulen's own nationalist thought is made clear in the history's introduction, in which he declares that:

There probably is not another nation in Europe - besides Ireland - which has bled more from emigration than our nation. As much as one third of our population has immigrated to the United States alone. We need to study the issues that are related to emigration, and often we will have to ask ourselves whether we have done everything we could to prevent so many thousands of Slovaks from having to go abroad to seek their livelihoods, especially today [written between 1939 and 1942] when the fate of our Slovak nation is in our own hands. At least with our vibrant Slovak language, we must do everything to link those hundreds of thousands of Slovak emigrants to their native country.⁴¹

³⁹ Tajták, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Národné Hnutie', p. 22.

⁴⁰ G. C. Ference, Preface to Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. xxiv-xxv.

⁴¹ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 7.

Despite the political purpose of Čulen's monograph, his study concludes with the outbreak of the First World War and so largely avoids the controversial subject of how the Czechoslovak state was formed with Slovak participation. Čulen's work has therefore lasted as a scholarly contribution in the field, but it is to some extent dated both by the political context in which it was formed and by the development of more extensive transnational and transatlantic historiography over recent decades.

Studies on the Slovak-American community have been provided by historians based in the United States, who have generally placed the topic within the broader theme of 'ethnic' or 'immigrant' history studies in that country. The works of Marián Stolárik partly bridge this historiographical divide between Slovak-American 'immigrant history' and Slovak nationalist political history: as this historian of Slovak heritage has studied both the integration of Slovak migrants into the United States as well as the contribution of Slovak-American groups to the movement for Czechoslovak independence during the First World War.⁴² Stolárik's study of the wartime Czechoslovak movement is notable for an extensive interview that he conducted with Štefan Osuský, a Slovak lawyer from Chicago who served as an official representative of the Slovak League of America and spokesman for the interwar Czechoslovak state; this work therefore provides a valuable source for the Czechoslovak movement from this important political figure's point of view. Historians such as Josef Barton and June Alexander have used case studies of Slovak settlement in cities like Cleveland and Pittsburgh respectively to document how institutions like Christian churches, fraternal

⁴² M. M. Stolárik, 'The Role of the American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914-1918', (University of Ottawa, MA Thesis, 1968); M. M. Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870-1918', (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1974); M. M. Stolárik, 'Slovak Immigration to the United States and its Relation to American Socialist and Labor Movements', *Migracijske teme*, 4: 1-2 (1988), pp. 144-155; M. M. Stolárik, 'Slovak Immigrants Come to Terms with Religious Diversity in North America', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96: 1 (Jan. 2010), pp. 56-84.

benefit organisations and the Slovak-language press helped to create forms of ethnically Slovak identity within major American cities.⁴³ These historians have also linked the formation of ethnically Slovak institutions to the wider pattern of ethnic organisation that emerged among other migrant groups in the United States.⁴⁴ June Alexander for example has shown how Slovak American organisations combined festivities to celebrate Slovak national days with open expressions of patriotism towards the United States, particularly following the United States' entry into the First World War in 1917.⁴⁵ Robert Zecker's study of the Slovak community in Philadelphia has argued that a form of 'bi-national identity' - in the typical form of the hyphenated 'Slovak-American' - was created by the agitation of Slovak American leaders and ethnic organisations to commit to both Slovak national identity and American state patriotism, rather than representing an accommodation of latent, Slovak 'national consciousness' among migrants living in the United States.⁴⁶ Zecker has argued that a sense of Slovak nationhood was rarely found among migrants travelling from Upper Hungary to the United States. His study has shown that forms of county and regional identity prevailed both in the practice of migration through kinship networks and in the direct statements of origin among migrant arrivals who described themselves as 'Hutoroks' or 'Hricovats'

⁴³ J. J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975; J. G. Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Lutherans, 1880-1915*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987. See also T. J. Shelley, *Slovaks on the Hudson, Most Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers and the Slovak Catholics of the Archdiocese of New York*, Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002.

⁴⁴ The most recent example of this scholarship being Zecker, *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks were Taught to Think Like White People*, New York: Continuum, 2011. See also H. F. Stein, *An Ethno-Historic Study of Slovak American Identity*, NY: Arno Press, 1980; J. Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987; M. M. Stolarik, *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience*, New York: AMS Press, 1989.

⁴⁵ Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism*.

⁴⁶ R. M. Zecker, "All Our Own Kind Here": The Creation of a Slovak-American Community in Philadelphia, 1890-1945", (University of Pennsylvania, PhD thesis, 1998), f. 313.

among countless other local forms of identification.⁴⁷ Such conclusions raise some important historical questions for the study of Slovak nationalism. It is worth investigating how migrants from Upper Hungary attained a sense of Slovak national identity in the United States as well as determining whether this transatlantic form of Slovak ‘national consciousness’ shaped the course of the Slovak national movement. Due to the integration of migrants from Upper Hungary into ethnically Slovak, mass membership organisations such as fraternal organisations and the Slovak League of America, the historian June Alexander has even argued that Slovak nationalism ‘developed its real roots in the United States’ before the First World War, rather than in Upper Hungary.⁴⁸ Despite studies of the Slovak migrant colony in the United States holding such important implications for the study of Slovak nationalism more generally at the turn of the twentieth century, these two fields of historical study have not yet interacted to any significant degree. The findings of these essentially self-contained studies of the Slovak American community have not been used to challenge the ways in which the migrant community has been conceived of by Slovak historiography as a whole. This study aims to correct this oversight by viewing the history of Slovak political nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century in its most appropriate, transatlantic frame of reference.

A discernible field of ‘transatlantic’ historiography of Slovak nationalism does not yet exist, nor are the broader fields of Slovak political, cultural or social history understood in their transatlantic context. It is therefore necessary to construct one from the largely separate fields of Slovak-American history, situated within the immigrant history of the United States, and the history of Slovak nationalism, a field that has been

⁴⁷ Zecker, “All Our Own Kind Here”, f. 18-19; f. 50-51.

⁴⁸ Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community*, p. 431-32.

primarily confined to the territory of modern-day Slovakia. The historiography of Irish nationalism serves as a good point of reference for this task, as the concept of a transatlantic Irish national movement has been well developed over the past two decades. Scholars from various disciplines have looked upon the activities of Irish nationalists in Ireland and the United States as part of a single nationalist movement that necessarily extended beyond the territory of the protagonists' envisaged national homeland.⁴⁹ As Martin Boyle and others have argued, the Irish national movement at the turn of the twentieth century operated within two bases of nationalist agitation: the 'homeland' of Ireland, where the bulk of political acts and agitation took place; and the Irish migrant diaspora, particularly in the United States, that funded this activity.⁵⁰ Irish newspapers, sports clubs and mutual aid societies in the United States were receptive to the cause of Irish nationalism, with mutual aid organisations and Irish American social clubs directly contributing funds to support Irish nationalist activity in the 'old country'.⁵¹ Irish American support was critical in supporting the tactic of 'rent wars', conducted by nationalists and small tenant farmers in the homeland against the Anglo-Irish nobility.⁵² The parliamentary campaigns for Irish Home Rule, conducted by Charles Parnell in the 1880s, were also funded by the considerable donations of the

⁴⁹ A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 150; E. M. Janis, *A Greater Ireland: The Land League and Transatlantic Nationalism in Gilded Age America*, Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin Press, 2015; E. Delaney, 'Our Island Story? Towards a Transnational History of Late Modern Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, 37 (2011), pp. 83-105; D. Brundage, 'Recent Directions in the History of Irish American Nationalism', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 28 (2009), pp. 82-89; C. T. McMahon, *The Global Dimension of Irish Identity: Race, Nation and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

⁵⁰ M. Boyle, 'Towards a (Re)theorisation of the Historical Geography of Nationalism in Diasporas: The Irish Diaspora as an Exemplar', *International Journal of Population Geography*, 7:6 (2001), p. 433.

⁵¹ Idem; A. N. Mulligan, 'Absence Makes The Heart Grow Fonder: Transatlantic Irish Nationalism and the 1867 Rising', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 6: 3 (2005), pp. 439-454; K. D. McGuire, 'The Transatlantic Paddy: The Making of a Transnational Irish Identity in Nineteenth-Century America', (University of California, PhD thesis, 2009), f. 165-166.

⁵² R. H. Wiebe, *Who We Are: A History of Popular Nationalism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 24-26; McGuire, 'The Transatlantic Paddy', f. 55.

Irish-American individuals and organisations.⁵³ As Robert Wiebe has pointed out, such nationalists were operating in a world of mass migration and dense networks of communication, meaning that ‘[it did not] matter who was in Ireland, who was in America, and who shuffled between them [...] Leaders and followers lived everywhere along the serpentine lines of migration’.⁵⁴ The Irish case study has outlined the extent to which nationalist politics in the late nineteenth century were often intensively transnational political movements. The extensive ties of written communication, finances as well as the constant physical movement of people between the old country and the United States that helped to build a transatlantic Irish nationalist movement also applied in the case of Slovaks from the 1890s. Such comparisons between the Slovak and Irish national movements at the turn of the twentieth century were made by Slovak American leaders at the time. On the creation of the Slovak League of America in 1907, a political umbrella group that represented all major Slovak organisations in the United States, the Slovak League’s inaugural president Štefan Furdek directly linked the efforts of the Slovak colony with those of transatlantic, Irish nationalists in declaring that:

We are following the example of the Irish Americans. Irish Americans through the medium of their own League [the United Irish League of America, founded in New York in 1901]⁵⁵ send more than \$100,000 annually to their own ‘old country’ to support the political struggle of the Irish against the English government... Through the foundation of the Slovak League, Slovak Americans have shown their ambition to follow [the example of] the Irish Americans.⁵⁶

The Irish case study is therefore not an anachronistic comparison. Slovak American leaders at the time were conscious of the parallels between their own and the Irish nationalist movements and sought to emulate the example set by the Irish-American

⁵³ Wiebe, *A History of Popular Nationalism*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵⁵ D. Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America, The Politics of Exile, 1798-1998*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 132.

⁵⁶ *Jednota*, [Cleveland, OH], 20 Nov. 1907, p. 4.

community. In a similar way, historians of the Slovak national movement ought to follow their lead and similarly take note of how the transatlantic ties between Irish migrants and their homeland national movement have been assessed within the historiography of Irish nationalism. It is necessary to combine the existing, but separate, bodies of research on the Slovak-American community and on Slovak political nationalism to assess the significance of the transatlantic element to Slovak nationalism.

Taking a fresh, transatlantic approach to the study of Slovak nationalism can offer a further new theme to the wider field of Habsburg studies. These studies have undergone a broader, revisionist turn over the past three decades that has challenged the conception of the Austro-Hungarian empire as a ‘degenerate and moribund’ state, as once described by the historian A. J. P. Taylor.⁵⁷ Historians have sought to overturn this prevailing narrative of imperial decline and fall, by identifying elements of the Habsburg dynastic state that were novel and indeed thriving on the eve of the First World War. Alan Sked has warned against the danger of reading the history of Austria-Hungary backwards from the calamity of the First World War and determining that ‘because the Habsburg Monarchy did not survive the First World War, it was bound not to survive in any case [...] that, because it did not survive, it was already in decline and that this decline had been a progressive one. At no point between 1867 and 1914 did the Monarchy even vaguely face the sort of challenge to its existence that it faced in 1848-9’.⁵⁸ Sked and other revisionist historians like F. R. Bridge have contended that the internal political problems of Austria-Hungary were abating in the final pre-war years: its economy continued to grow as its regions became more interconnected by trade; and

⁵⁷ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918*, 2nd Ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, p. 236.

⁵⁸ A. Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918*, London: Longman, 1989, p. 231.

a renewed political settlement was reached between the governments in Vienna and Budapest.⁵⁹ In addition to arguing for the resilience of the existing imperial structures of the Habsburg state, historians have identified new ways in which the imperial regime attempted to foster public support among its multinational citizenry. Daniel Unowsky has shown how the religious and political cult of Emperor Franz Josef was developed by imperial officials through ostentatious court ceremonies and public tours that sought to reinforce dynastic and state loyalties at a level above that of nationality.⁶⁰ Unowsky and other historians such as Gary Cohen has shown that the emergence of nationalist sentiment directed either against the Habsburg state or the imperial dynasty occurred at a very late stage before the outbreak of war, with national movements more often seeking to co-opt the existing imperial framework for political power and the implementation of nationalist demands in terms of language use and in administrative practice.⁶¹ Given their emphasis on the ability of the Habsburg regime to command the loyalty of its subjects and to co-opt national elites into imperial politics during peacetime, the effects of the First World War are largely credited for the demise of Austria-Hungary in this revisionist historiography. Mark Cornwall's studies have shown how the Habsburg state lost legitimacy under its wartime conditions of censorship and through the influence of the military in trials of nationalist leaders for treason.⁶² The innovations that Austria-Hungary undertook to defeat their enemies in wartime also

⁵⁹ Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire*, p. 198-199, p. 232; F. R. Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy Among the Great Powers, 1815-1918*, New York: Berg, 1990, p. 2.

⁶⁰ D. L. Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2005. p. 6, p. 184.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180-2; G. B. Cohen, 'Our Laws, Our Taxes, and Our Administration', in O. Bartov and E. D. Weitz (eds.), *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013, p. 116.

⁶² M. Cornwall, 'Traitors and the Meaning of Treason in Austria-Hungary's Great War', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. XXV, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 118-119, p. 132; M. Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle For Hearts and Minds*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000, p. 25-26, p. 29-32.

backfired, with their propaganda campaigns to demoralise enemy soldiers on the Russian and Italian fronts in 1917-18 being met with a far larger Allied campaign to exploit the empire's nationality conflicts in the final, critical months of the war.⁶³ The eventual collapse of the Habsburg Empire has come to be viewed by historians as the outcome of the vast economic and military strains caused by the First World War, as well as the failure of Austria-Hungary's policies to either secure a military victory or retain the widely-felt loyalty of its citizens to the Habsburg dynasty and the state.

This reinterpretation of Habsburg studies has in turn contested the significance as well as the forms taken by nationalism, the ideology described as 'the great fatal problem of the monarchy' in Oscar Jászi's classic account of Austria-Hungary's dissolution.⁶⁴ Greater attention has been paid to the internal tensions that existed within self-styled 'national' groups between the intellectual political leadership and a wider population who were often viewed as being indifferent to nationality politics and its goals.⁶⁵ Rita Krueger for example has highlighted the continued importance of the aristocracy in Habsburg politics, and the influence of aristocratic conceptions of Bohemian state rights upon the programme of an emergent Czech nationalist intelligentsia in the 19th Century.⁶⁶ In a similar manner, Nancy Wingfield has documented the role of nationalist agitators in appropriating symbols, institutions and social space within Bohemian crown lands, and the role played by such a

⁶³ Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, p. 11, p. 104.

⁶⁴ O. Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929, p. 92.

⁶⁵ T. Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008; P. M. Judson and M. L. Rozenblit (eds.), *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.

⁶⁶ R. Krueger, *Czech, German and Noble: Status and National Identity in Habsburg Bohemia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

reinterpretation of the past in directing local politics towards nationalist conflict..⁶⁷

Jeremy King's use of a local case study in the region of Budweis/České Budějovice has outlined the contingent nature of identities and political association found within populations targeted by nationalist agitators; the politics of nationalism competed with, rather than replaced, local forms of identification and a continued loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty and the state.⁶⁸ Pieter Judson's broader study of 'language frontiers' within the Austrian half of the empire concurs with this assessment. Judson argues that accounts of the Habsburg state as being permeated by nationalist conflict reflect the success of a narrative developed by nationalist political leaders to justify the necessity of the empire's demise, rather than the everyday, lived experience of the empire's subjects.⁶⁹ Judson describes a political environment in which 'public insults, barroom brawls, vandalism to property - each of these might well be accompanied by or later justified by some form of nationalist rhetoric'.⁷⁰ Through their interpretation of everyday life in the late Habsburg state, Judson shows how nationalists 'transformed the actors and thereby the meaning of the events. It was no longer the nationalist minority (on either side) that had acted, it was 'the people'.⁷¹

Judson continues this theme in a significant monograph of the Habsburg Empire that emphasises the close relationship that existed between the concepts of empire and nationalism within that state. Judson argues that in the multinational Habsburg Empire 'concepts of nationhood and empire depended on each other for their coherence [...]

⁶⁷ N. M. Wingfield, *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: How The Bohemian Lands Became Czech*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

⁶⁸ J. King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 5.

⁶⁹ P. M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 82, p. 218.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 216-7.

⁷¹ *Idem.*

they developed in dialogue with each other, rather than as binary opposites. By 1900 many ideologists of empire harboured nationalist beliefs, and nationalists regularly sought political solutions within the legal framework of the empire'.⁷² Judson underlines the key role played by Habsburg administration in setting the terms of nationalist debate by conducting detailed forms of record-keeping such as the census, which became critical to supporting the claims made by nationalist activists for education in their 'national' language or a share in the local administration. Judson argues that 'the insistence that all people belonged to ethnic or national communities must be understood partly as a product of political work accomplished by nationalist activists. It was also, however, a product of the ways agents of the empire categorised its diverse peoples in order to govern more effectively'.⁷³ While this argument is convincing in the case of the Austrian half of the Habsburg state, the establishment of an internally autonomous Hungary following the Compromise of 1867 somewhat lessened the direct influence of imperial rhetoric on the course of political nationalism there. While minority nationalist parties, including the Slovaks, still appealed to Franz Josef to fulfil their political demands in his role as King of Hungary, the presence of a Hungarian administration that typically sought to 'Magyarise' the population in terms of their language use established a more confrontational relationship between the central authorities and minority nationalist movements in Hungary.

While historians have substantially reappraised the 'internal' history of the late Habsburg Empire, this approach has not yet been generally extended beyond the empire's geographical boundaries. This is even though an estimated three million subjects of the Habsburg Empire emigrated to the United States, chiefly between 1870

⁷² Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, p. 10.

⁷³ *Idem.*

and 1910.⁷⁴ Tara Zahra's recent study of transatlantic migration from the Habsburg Empire and its successor states is the only account to have placed the experiences of these migrants into the revised framework of late Habsburg history. Zahra's work demonstrates how flows of migration itself, as well as aspects of the process such as the controversial role of emigration agents became embedded in the social and nationalist political questions of Austria-Hungary.⁷⁵ The work argues for example that 'Hungarian and Polish activists [...] began to see emigration as a potential weapon in a nationalist demographic struggle. They plotted to discourage the emigration of Hungarians and Poles, while encouraging the emigration of other national minorities. Emigration, they hoped, could alter the demographic/ethnolinguistic balance sheet in their favour'.⁷⁶ The bulk of Zahra's work shows how this nationalistic view of migration was inherited and redefined within the successor states to the Habsburg Empire as well as interwar Poland. In the case of Slovak-speaking migration, Zahra shows how the interwar Czechoslovak authorities sought to hinder Czech and Slovak-speaking migrants from leaving their new state. By viewing these migrants as potential 'colonising material' that could secure Czechoslovak rule over minority national groups in border districts, the authorities in Prague deployed a selective principle of migration that had been advocated by nationalist activists within the late Habsburg state.⁷⁷ Zahra's work provides a compelling example of how the phenomenon of mass migration can enrich the historiography of the late Habsburg state as well as interwar Czechoslovakia and other successor states. Assessing how 'national indifference' as well as loyalty to the imperial

⁷⁴ 'Table 8: Immigration to the United States, by country of origin, during the period 1820-1910', *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3: Statistical Review of Immigration, 1820-1910; Distribution of Immigrants, 1850-1900*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911, p. 12.

⁷⁵ T. Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World*, New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16-17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17, p. 111.

dynasty played out in the transatlantic experience of migrants to and from Austria-Hungary offers a largely unexplored aspect of the Habsburg Empire's late imperial history. Understandably limited by taking a broader view of Habsburg migration, Zahra's work does not assess Slovak-speaking migration in any great depth prior to the creation of the Czechoslovak state. This study seeks to address that gap in the existing knowledge, by applying the more nuanced understanding of nationalism and the politics of the late Habsburg state to the case study of Slovak-speaking migration from Upper Hungary. By establishing a method that better accounts for how Slovak political nationalism developed in the context of intensive, transatlantic migration than existing accounts of Slovak nationalism have assumed, this case study will also be valuable to those conducted on other nationalist movements within the Habsburg domains such as the South Slav and Ruthenian national movements - that developed in a similar context of heavy transatlantic migration among their claimed 'national' populations at the time of the First World War.⁷⁸

This transatlantic analysis of the Slovak national movement interacts with theoretical concepts of nationalism: a body of work that has attracted great scrutiny since the 1980s. A 'constructivist' approach, as favoured by social scientists like Ernest Gellner, has typically viewed the development of nationalism as a sociological process that occurred in European societies during their transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy in the nineteenth century.⁷⁹ Constructivist theorists view this shift in the basic economic purpose of societies as being key to the development of nationalist

⁷⁸ On the Ruthene movement, that overlapped the activities of the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary, see G. Brown, 'The Czechoslovak Orient: Carpathian Ruthenia as an Imagined Colonial Space', (Victoria University of Wellington, PhD Thesis, 2016); P. R. Magosci, 'Magyars and Carpatho-Rusyns: On the Seventieth Anniversary of the Founding of Czechoslovakia', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 14: 3, (Dec. 1990), pp. 427-460.

⁷⁹ See E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1983; E. Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1994.

thought: as white-collar roles in state and private bureaucracy increased in importance in the new industrial society, literary education became a key to social advancement.⁸⁰ In the multi-lingual societies of central and eastern Europe - including Slovak-speakers living in the Kingdom of Hungary - education and language became a central basis for mobilising mass nationalist movements. As the historian Eric Hobsbawm put it, it was the ‘lesser examination-passing classes’ who were prone to agitate for a national expression of culture, education in the vernacular, national language of their education, and to obtain access to employment for their national group within the state bureaucracy.⁸¹ Hobsbawm specifically highlighted the development of nationality and language within the institution of the state census in constructing ‘not only a nationality, but a linguistic nationality’.⁸² In contrast to this stance, social scientists like Anthony Smith and John Armstrong have argued for an ‘ethno-symbolist’ approach to understanding how and why nationalism emerged as a potent political force.⁸³ Rather than nationalism being chiefly ‘constructed’ in the modern historical period, this approach stresses the importance of local and regional features such as ‘shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity’ - described by Smith as forming a social group known as an *ethnie*, that acts as the basis for the development of later nationalist movements.⁸⁴ Smith has argued that ‘the advent of modernity saw a world divided as much by ethnie as into territorial polities, and resounding with the clash of ethno-religious solidarities as much as any

⁸⁰ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1983, p. 36-39.

⁸¹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 113-118.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁸³ J. A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982; A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986; A. D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995.

⁸⁴ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 32.

other allegiance. It was into this world of *ethnie* and ethno-centrism that nationalism was born and nations arose'.⁸⁵ While both schools of thought contest how nationalist thought was generated, each view both nationalism and the 'nation' as a political concept. As described by Benedict Anderson, the idea of the nation exists as 'an imagined political community, and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.⁸⁶ Anderson's understanding of the nation as 'imagined' is not a pejorative statement and does not render the political idea of the nation illegitimate. Rather, Anderson makes clear in his approach to the study of nationalism that 'communities are not to be distinguished by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined'.⁸⁷ The present historical study of Slovak political nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century takes for granted the development of a form of Slovak nationalist thought. By 1880, the beginning of the period under study, a Slovak National Party had already existed in Hungary for two decades, while Slovak nationalist manifestos stretched back to the European revolutionary year of 1848.⁸⁸ Yet the transatlantic scope of Slovak political nationalism offers an intriguing case study about how nationalist thought developed in two dissimilar societies - the Kingdom of Hungary and the United States - and to what extent these different social and economic contexts influenced the taking up of Slovak 'national consciousness' on both sides of the Atlantic. To date, theorists of nationalism have held a territorially limited understanding of where nationalism is cultivated. They focus on the activity conducted within the perceived 'national homeland': in the case of the Slovak nationalists, this analysis is limited to the Kingdom of Hungary. This thesis' investigation of how Slovak political nationalism

⁸⁵ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 125.

⁸⁶ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd Ed., New York: Verso, 1991, p. 6.

⁸⁷ *Idem.*

⁸⁸ Bartl, *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon*, p. 109.

developed in a transatlantic space offers an important insight into how nationalism operated in practice in the context of the mass migration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This study argues that the development of a Slovak migrant colony in the United States was a crucial new factor that shaped the existing relationship between the Slovak nationalist leadership in the ‘old country’ and the contemporary Hungarian state. It views the Slovak American community by the 1900s and 1910s as participants in what can be best understood as a form of ‘homeland nationalism’, as described by Rogers Brubaker.⁸⁹ Through the use of historical and contemporary examples, Brubaker has persuasively argued that the policies of a ‘nationalising state’ - a term that befits the policies of the autonomous Kingdom of Hungary after 1867 - and the response of the leadership of national minorities to these policies are liable to be shaped by the presence of an ‘external national homeland’ that lends support to the minority nationalist cause.⁹⁰ The ‘dynamic interdependence’ between these three, distinct sources of political activity can be found in the relationship between the leadership of the Slovak colony in the United States with both the existing, Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary and the Hungarian state at the turn of the twentieth century.⁹¹ Brubaker described how:

minority and homeland elites continuously monitor the new nation-state and are especially sensitive to any signs of projects of ‘nationalisation’ or ‘national integration’. When they perceive such signs, they seek to build up and sustain a perception of the state as an oppressively or unjustly nationalising state [...] The minority might mobilise against the perceived projects of nationalisation and might seek autonomy or even threaten secession. The homeland, claiming the right to monitor and protect the interests of its ethnic co-nationals abroad, might provide material or moral support for these initiatives and might lodge protests with the nationalising

⁸⁹ R. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 58.

⁹⁰ *Idem.*

⁹¹ *Idem.*

state or with international organisations against the perceived projects of nationalisation.⁹²

Brubaker adopts a narrower definition of an ‘external national homeland’ than suggested in this work: arguing that this concept applies chiefly to ‘national minorities whose co-ethnics are numerically or politically dominant in another state’.⁹³ While this definition cannot be applied to the half a million or so Slovak migrants who lived within the United States, the discrepancy indicates that Brubaker’s definition of an ‘external national homeland’ ought to be understood more broadly. Despite lacking discernible political power and influence within their adopted country as a national group, Slovaks in the United States were still able to form a significant, three-sided relationship with the Slovak national leadership in Hungary and the Hungarian state. The relatively higher degree of ‘national consciousness’ and organisational strength available to Slovak nationalist agitators in the United States was a more important factor than the degree of power held by Slovak migrants within the American political system. Given the comparative weakness of Slovak nationalist institutions within the Hungarian state and the rapid development of Slovak migrant organisations in the United States, the Slovak colony in the United States was far better placed to claim the role of an ‘external national homeland’ than is suggested by the insignificant status of Slovak Americans within the American political structure. Brubaker’s model of a three-sided relationship of nationalist politics – in this case between a nationalising, multinational Hungarian state; a Slovak nationalist leadership in Hungary; and an influential colony of Slovak-speaking migrants in the United States – seems the most useful method for

⁹² Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 58.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

understanding how transatlantic Slovak political nationalism developed yet has not been previously explored by historical studies.

The existing historiography on Slovak nationalism has overwhelmingly focused on only one aspect of this three-sided relationship: the ‘internal’ nationalist conflict in Hungary between the central government and the minority, Slovak nationalist movement. The present study will focus its attention on the second, previously neglected aspect of Slovak nationalism: the relationship between the emergent Slovak American colony and the nationalist leadership in the ‘old country’. A source-based analysis of Slovak American relations with the Hungarian state government is beyond the scope of this study; but where possible this important feature of the Slovak national movement will be made clear using the limited number of secondary works on that similarly neglected topic.⁹⁴ The main contribution of this present study will be to place the activities of Slovak nationalists within Hungary and the United States within a single framework of analysis, one that engages with the separate historiographies that exist for Slovaks living on both sides of the Atlantic. To accomplish this task, both the archival and published historical research undertaken in this study will also be transatlantic in scope. The Slovak National Archives in Bratislava have been used primarily to understand the Slovak nationalist leadership in Kingdom of Hungary to 1918 and in the early Czechoslovak state from 1918 until the ratification of the Czechoslovak state constitution in February 1920, which marks the end of this study. The archival holdings of the Slovak League of America, as well as the extensive correspondence between Slovak migrants and groups in the United States and prominent Slovak politicians like

⁹⁴ A discussion of Hungarian migration more generally, as well as the generally relaxed attitude of the central government to the phenomenon of mass migration before the First World War is provided by J. Puskás (trans. M. Bales and E. Pálmai), *From Hungary to the United States, (1880-1914)*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982.

Pavol Blaho, Andrej Hlinka and post-war Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakia Vavro Šrobár were consulted in the Slovak National Archive to understand the links between the Slovak American colony and political leaders who operated in the territory of modern-day Slovakia. This task was supplemented by a study of the considerable archive holdings held on Slovak American organisations by the Matica Slovenská institute in Martin, in north-central Slovakia. Further Slovak American archival resources were consulted at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies in Philadelphia, where a fellowship residency and funding were awarded to allow this study to be conducted. The Immigration History Research Center in Minneapolis also provided generous financial support towards the use of their substantial collection of Slovak-language materials from Hungary and the United States. The correspondence of Slovak American newspaper editors, fraternal organisation officers and leaders of the Slovak League of America were studied primarily in these and other United States archives, which also provided full runs of Slovak-language almanacs such as *Národný Kalendár* and *Jednota*, published by the Slovak American secular and Roman Catholic fraternal organisations respectively. Slovak-language newspapers were also consulted as the principal form of nationalist agitation at the turn of the twentieth century, including key titles such as *Národné Noviny*, the official organ of the Slovak National Party; *Ludové Noviny*, *Hlas* and other Slovak nationalist newspapers in Upper Hungary that represented different factions within the political movement. This research was supplemented by a survey of the Slovak American press, from the first Slovak-language newspaper *Amerikánsko Slovenské Noviny* to the most prominent titles of the First World War period, such as *Jednota* and *Národné Noviny*, organs of the two largest Slovak American fraternal organisations. The collections and rare Slovak-language books held by the Slovak

Institute Library in Cleveland, as well as the family archive of Milan Getting, housed in Pittsburgh were also of great value in reconstructing the factional divisions that developed between different sections of the Slovak American nationalist leadership. United States' government reports compiled by the 'Dillingham Commission' on Immigration from 1907 to 1911, as well as the English-language press and popular journals were consulted to provide a wider perspective on the phenomenon of mass Slovak migration to the United States. By making full use of the archival resources on both sides of the Atlantic, the full extent of the movement of people, information, funds, and political ideas between Slovak nationalists in the Kingdom of Hungary and the migrant colony in the United States can be fully uncovered for the first time in this study: and the transatlantic national movement that developed can be fully accounted for.

Chapter 2: Slovak-speaking Migration between Upper Hungary and the United States, 1880-1920

Migration was the key feature of Europe's 'long nineteenth century' that transformed Slovak nationalism from a limited campaign for cultural recognition into a broader and transatlantic movement to attain Slovak political rights and self-government in Upper Hungary. Many Slovak-speaking citizens of Hungary determined that the rising industrial economy of the United States offered better immediate prospects than the limited means of economic and social advancement available in their homeland: for even as late as 1910 some 62% of the Slovak-speaking population in Upper Hungary were employed in agriculture.¹ Few of these migrants likely considered the impact of their decision beyond immediate circles of their family and friends, but the sum of these decisions constituted an unprecedented movement of people between the Kingdom of Hungary and the United States. Slovak-speakers in the United States were a statistically insignificant group in the 1870s, yet by 1914 there were an estimated half a million in the country. By 1920, the United States census recorded 621,000 first and second generation Slovak migrants.² The rate of Slovak migration per head of population in these two generations was comparable to Norway and Ireland as among the highest of all European migrant groups.³ The origins and nature of Slovak migration to the United States must first be investigated if we are to understand how and why Slovak nationalism developed among the Slovak migrants who undertook these transatlantic crossings between the 1870s and 1914.

Slovak-speaking migrants left similar social conditions and for the same general reasons as dozens of other national groups that made up the 'new immigration' of southern

¹ E. Mannová (ed.), *A Concise History of Slovakia*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000, p. 186.

² M. M. Stolárik, 'Slovak Immigrants Come to Terms with Religious Diversity in North America', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96: 1 (Jan. 2010), p. 56-57.

³ 'The Races that Go into the American Melting-Pot', *New York Times*, 21 May 1911, p. SM2.

and eastern Europeans to the United States between 1880 and 1914.⁴ They were joined from the multilingual Kingdom of Hungary alone by speakers of Magyar, German, Ruthenian, Serb and Croat languages respectively, as well as a portion of Hungary's considerable Jewish religious minority.⁵ The impact of Slovak migration on the history of Slovak nationalism was however far more significant than among almost all of the various national groups who contributed to the 'New Immigration'. This chapter will identify how the precise nature, patterns and lived experiences of transatlantic migration stimulated the creation of a transatlantic, Slovak national movement. The rapid growth of the Slovak colony in the United States caused by the exceptional rate of transatlantic migration prior to the First World War, made possible the emergence of the Slovak American community as a new base for Slovak cultural life as well as nationalist agitation. It was not preordained that Slovak-speaking migrants would be interested in the 'national' affairs of a tiny Slovak nationalist elite, that had not appealed to the interests of the wider population in Upper Hungary. The intention of most Slovak-speaking migrants however to return to Hungary after a few years of work and saving money in the United States gave greater significance to the social and economic conditions of the 'old country'. Returnee Slovak-speaking migrants shaped the traditional lifestyles of their native villages, as well as often contributing to the spread of Slovak 'national consciousness' as they had generated by living in the United States. This two-way flow of Slovak migrants explains the significance of the transatlantic relationship to Slovak nationalism - a flow in both directions that lasted until the early 1920s. This period of essentially unrestricted mass migration of Slovak-

⁴ A United States' Commissioner for Immigration, William Williams, used the term to signal that tighter entry restrictions should be enforced from 1909. 'New Bars for "Undesirables" at Ellis Island', *New York Times*, 18 Jul. 1909, p. SM11.

⁵ J. Puskás, (trans. M. Bales and E. Pálmai), *From Hungary to the United States, (1880-1914)*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982, p. 30.

speakers to and from the United States spanned two generations and was complemented by a transatlantic form of Slovak political nationalism.

The mass migration of Slovak-speakers from Upper Hungary to the United States was a new phenomenon that developed between 1870 and 1914. While significant migration to the United States developed in the Habsburg Empire from the 1850s, the practice was mostly confined to German and Czech-speaking migrants in its western regions such as Austria and Bohemia.⁶ A few Slovak-speakers lived in the United States as individuals or in small groups by the 1850s and 1860s: one historical account claims that a small contingent of ‘Slovak riflemen’ was formed in Chicago to fight for the Union forces during the American Civil War.⁷ A Slovak-speaking tailor from Šariš/Sáros County in Upper Hungary travelled to the United States from 1861 to 1865 and was employed to maintain the uniforms of the Confederate forces. His account of conditions in the United States later convinced his nephew, Ján Pankuch, to travel with his young family to work in the Pennsylvania coal-mines in 1877.⁸ The significance of the United States as a major destination for Slovak migration was established around the time of Pankuch’s transatlantic voyage. Accounts from ‘pioneer’ emigrants of life and working conditions in the United States first emerged in Slovak newspapers in Upper Hungary in the early 1870s.⁹ A serious cholera outbreak also swept northern Hungary in 1873, which Konštantín Čulen has also

⁶ In addition to substantial Czech-speaking communities that took up farming opportunities in Iowa, Nebraska, Texas and other frontier states, the Czech-speaking community of Allegheny City in Pennsylvania established their Czech-speaking church, Saint Wenceslaus (Václav) in 1871. Only in later decades did the flow of Slovaks and other migrants from Hungary contribute their own migrant churches and organisations to Allegheny City and the wider industrial conurbation of Pittsburgh. See M. Rechcigl, *Czech American Timeline: Chronology of Milestones in the History of Czechs in America*, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2013, p. 53-69.

⁷ P. P. Yurchak, *The Slovaks: Their History and Their Traditions*, Whiting, IN: Obrana Press, 1946, p. 168-169.

⁸ United States, Ohio, Cleveland, Slovak Institute, ‘Personalities File, Ján Pankuch, 1869-1952’, J. J. Hornack, ‘John C. Pankuch, Genealogical Facts’, 10 Apr. 2001, f. 1.

⁹ M. M. Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870-1918’, (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1974), f. 6.

identified as an important trigger for more widespread migration from the affected regions to the new world.¹⁰ A critical blow to the agrarian economy of Upper Hungary was also caused by the onset of the ‘Great Depression’ in global agricultural prices in the early 1870s: a downturn shaped by the opening of the American Midwest to the global market through the rail hub of Chicago.¹¹ The United States was influencing the economic prospects and social conditions in Hungary, even before so many of that country’s inhabitants migrated to take their own share of American growth and prosperity.

The development of mass Slovak-speaking migration in the late 1870s was due to two important features that spread the idea of the United States as a prosperous destination for the ordinary inhabitants of Upper Hungary. The first reason was the success of pioneer migrants from among the different religious and national groups who lived alongside Slovak-speakers in Upper Hungary. A transatlantic migration of Jewish tradesmen and craftsmen had, for example, taken place from the 1850s in Galicia - a neighbouring region to Upper Hungary. The historian Joseph Barton has argued that the Slovak-speaking pioneer emigrants who travelled to the United States two decades later were essentially ‘trailing’ the path set by accounts of these Galician Jews.¹² Slovak pioneer emigrants overwhelmingly came from the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary that bordered Galicia, and news of the fantastic prospects of travelling traders and craftsmen in the United States could spread from one neighbouring valley to the next.¹³ A further stimulus came from German-speaking craftsmen from Spiš/Szepes/Zips¹⁴ County, who joined the

¹⁰ K. Čulen, ‘Americkí Slováci v národnom živote slovenskom do roku 1914’, in M. Šprinc (ed.), *Slovenská Líga v Amerike: Štyridsatročná*, Scranton, PA: Obrana Press, 1947, p. 4-5.

¹¹ A. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 121.

¹² J. J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 50-51.

¹³ J. Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987, p. 10.

¹⁴ As this county of Hungary was known in the Slovak, Magyar and German languages respectively.

broader wave of German-speaking migration from Austria and Bohemia and whose accounts had a similar effect to the Jewish traders upon their semi-skilled Slovak counterparts. A history of the Slovak community in Youngstown, Ohio, for example, noted that the first Slovak settlers in the American town came from Spiš County in 1878, and concluded that the pioneer Slovaks ‘probably followed the example of the Germans and Jews, who had started to emigrate to America first’.¹⁵ A third source of skilled Slovak-speaking migrants came from itinerant tradesmen. The town of Trenčín/Trencsén for example was known for its travelling wire dealers and tinkers, some of whom took this tradition with them to the United States.¹⁶ Migrants from Trenčín formed a substantial portion of the Slovak-speaking colony in Philadelphia, while other small towns of Upper Hungary known for the textile trade such as Zvolen/Zólyom also contributed to the flow of Slovak-speaking tradesmen and semi-skilled workers to the United States.¹⁷

While newspaper accounts and testimonies from travelling skilled workers can account for the interest of a relatively small group of Slovak pioneer migrants, American emigrant agents played a crucial role in triggering mass migration among the rural and relatively unskilled Slovak-speaking masses. The historian Marián Stolárik concludes that these agents began to operate among small-scale mining communities in north-eastern Upper Hungary from 1869. At first their purpose was to convince miners to transfer their skills to the much larger centre of coal-mining production in Pennsylvania where they would be better paid for their work.¹⁸ Konstantin Čulen identified a second wave of emigration agents that arrived in Upper Hungary on behalf of the American coal-mining

¹⁵ AMS, Fond KSZ č. šk. 9, inv č. 98, porad č 267, M. Salva, ‘Úryvky z dejín Slovákov v Mahoning doline, 1, 2, 3 a 4 mája 1936’, Youngstown, OH, 1936. ljd/75s., f. 5.

¹⁶ R. M. Zecker, “‘All Our Own Kind Here’: The Creation of a Slovak-American Community in Philadelphia, 1890-1945”, (University of Pennsylvania, PhD thesis, 1998), f. 75-80.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 44; Yurchak, *The Slovaks*, p. 166.

¹⁸ Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 6.

operators in 1877, whose activities now directly targeted farm labourers: whose physical strength would make up for their lack of practical experience in mining roles.¹⁹ The flow of skilled and semi-skilled Slovak-speaking craftsmen and workers from small towns therefore combined with a rapidly increasing flow of rural day labourers from the countryside to form the basis of Slovak-speaking migration to the United States.

This pattern of mass migration became established among Slovak-speakers living in Upper Hungary in the late 1870s. Over the following decades, the rate of Slovak-speaking immigration to these new Slovak American communities reached new heights. Slovak immigration to the United States peaked in 1905, when more than 52,000 Slovak-speakers arrived in the United States: around 2% of the Slovak population of Upper Hungary in a single year.²⁰ In total from 1899 - when American officials began to count immigrants according to 'race or nationality' rather than by 'country of birth or origin'²¹ - until 1910, some 377,000 Slovaks were recorded as immigrants to the United States.²² The American port records indicate that by far the largest category of Slovak migrants were 'labourers' and 'farm labourers', who accounted for 80% of the total. The flow of skilled workers such as blacksmiths and miners that had contributed to the first wave of pioneer migration now accounted for less than 5% of migrants.²³ Another notable feature during the period of

¹⁹ K. Čulen, (trans. D. C. Necas), *History of Slovaks in America*, St. Paul, MN: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007, p. 28-29.

²⁰ 'Table 11: Number of Immigrants Admitted, Fiscal Years 1899-1910, by Race or People', *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3: Statistical Review of Immigration, 1820-1910; Distribution of Immigrants, 1850-1900*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911, p. 46.

²¹ 'The Races that Go into the American Melting-Pot', *New York Times*, 21 May 1911, p. SM2.

²² 'Table 10: Immigration to the United States, by Race or People, during the period 1899-1910', *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 45.

²³ 'Table 20: Number of Immigrants Admitted to the United States Reporting Each Specified Occupation, Fiscal Years 1899-1910, by Race or People', *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 95, p. 97.

mass migration was the steadily rising proportion of female migrants, who on the eve of the First World War outnumbered males in what had begun as a male-dominated process.²⁴ An account written by a Slovak migrant, Juraj Matey, provides both a vivid and a generally applicable illustration of the transatlantic journey experienced by Slovak mass migrants to the United States. The sixteen-year-old Matey left his home village in Šariš county with his father, younger brother and two other relatives, crossing the Tatra mountain passes into Galicia during the closing months of 1880.²⁵ They arrived first in the city of Krakow and then secured railway passage from Oświęcim (Auschwitz) into Germany, where they left for the United States from the port of Hamburg. After a month's voyage they arrived in New York on 26 February 1881.²⁶ While the rest of the group continued to their intended destination of Ashley, Pennsylvania, Juraj Matey was forced to remain and find work in New York for six weeks until his father had earned sufficient wages to pay for his onward rail ticket.²⁷ Matey's journey, that crossed much of the European continent to the German ports in the depths of winter, was an experience shared in one form or another by nearly half a million Slovak-speakers between the 1870s and 1914.

Ordinary Slovak-speaking migrants did not 'vote with their feet' due to a political struggle between a rather small and isolated group of Slovak nationalists and the governing regime of Hungary. Social and economic factors drew them to the United States, as they also enticed Slovak-speaking migrants to find work in other parts of the Kingdom of Hungary throughout this period. Slovak migrants opted for the United States in such large numbers because the new destination offered a prospect of cash wealth that would greatly

²⁴ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 38.

²⁵ Fond KSZ, č. šk 10, inv. č. 102, porad. č. 349, J. Matey, 'Pre Historiu amerických Slovákov napisal...', Philadelphia, PA, [1936-1937], 3jd/34s., f. 5.

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ Fond KSZ, č. šk 10, inv. č. 102, porad. č. 349, 'Juraj Matey: životopis', Philadelphia, PA, [1936-1937], f. 1.

enhance their social and economic status upon returning to the ‘old country’. This opportunity was hard to come by in the existing agrarian economy of Hungary, as well as in the country’s limited, though rapidly growing industrial sector. While Julianna Puskás’ detailed study of Hungarian emigration points out that wages for agricultural labour in Hungary gradually increased in the second half of the nineteenth century, this took place from a very low benchmark. The average daily wage rate for agricultural workers in the early 1900s was estimated to be as little as thirty U.S. cents – corresponding to roughly \$8 in present-day value.²⁸ Greater mechanisation in agriculture, a decline in the role of artisan manufacturing and a substantial increase in the general population all combined to make finding secure work increasingly difficult.²⁹ There were also few prospects for common labourers or land-scarce tenant farmers and agricultural labourers to improve their economic lot in rural Upper Hungary by renting or owning arable land.³⁰

Slovak migrants gravitated towards the industries of the United States which had a high demand for largely unskilled labour. The coal mining regions of the Upper Schuylkill valley and the steel-manufacturing hub of Pittsburgh, both located in the state of Pennsylvania, formed the core of Slovak American migrant colony. 195,000 Slovak immigrants opted for the state of Pennsylvania between 1899 and 1910, accounting for roughly half of the total Slovak migration.³¹ A study of 45,000 Slovak adult males, mostly living in Pennsylvania, found that some 69% of these male migrants were employed in coal

²⁸ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 55. The figure of thirty cents per day was estimated by J. R. Commons, statistician of the National Civic Federation in the United States. J. R. Commons, ‘Racial Composition of the American People’, *The Chautauquan; A Weekly Newsmagazine* (1880-1914) (Meadville, PA), 38: 5 (Jan 1904), p. 435; ‘Social Conditions in Pittsburg’, *The Independent*, 21 Jan. 1908, p. 154-5.

²⁹ Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 1-4; Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 37; J. G. Alexander, ‘The Immigrant Church and Community: The Formation of Pittsburgh Slovak Religious Institutions, 1880-1914’, (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1980), f. 31; Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, p. 40-41.

³⁰ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 26.

³¹ ‘Table 27: Destination of Immigrants Admitted to the United States, Fiscal Years 1899-1910, inclusive, by Race or People’, *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 289-292.

mining and a further 27% were engaged in other roles in the iron and steel industries.³² Slovak migrants pursued similar opportunities in heavy manufacturing or coal-mining in the neighbouring states of Ohio and New Jersey, while a substantial number also gravitated to the larger cities of Chicago and New York.³³ Slovak-speaking migrants were given the opportunity to acquire wealth by working in the industrial rolling-mills and coal mines of the United States. The average daily wage rate in these industries was generally estimated to be five times higher than in Upper Hungary.³⁴ The wage rates provided for different types of unskilled labour in the steel rolling mills of Pittsburgh for example were calculated as being between \$1.35 and \$1.65 per day in 1908.³⁵ The typical Slovak migrant worker retained much of these wages as saved income rather than spending it on food, lodging and other costs. The Pittsburgh Survey, a sociological study of the leading industrial city of the United States conducted in 1907-08, found that lodging houses for immigrant workers could provide food and board for just \$10 a month.³⁶ The lives of Slovak-speaking migrants were not solely devoted to hard work and thrift though: their consumption of beer and grain alcohol on the Sabbath often shocked American sensibilities.³⁷ The Pittsburgh Survey noted for example in its discussion of Slovaks and other migrant workers that:

³² 'Table 129: Number and Per Cent Distribution of Selected Groups of Foreign-Born White Males, Ten Years of Age and Older, in Typical Occupations in Certain States', in N. Carpenter, *Immigrants and Their Children: A Study Based on Census Statistics Relevant to the Foreign Born and the Native White of Foreign or Mixed Parentage*, Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1927, p. 285.

³³ Some 89% of Slovak immigrants during between 1899 and 1910 settled in the states of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Ohio and Illinois. See 'Table 27: Destination of Immigrants', *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 289-292.

³⁴ Commons, 'Racial Composition of the American People', p. 435; P. Roberts, 'Immigrant Wage Earners.' in P. U. Kellogg (ed.) *Wage-Earning Pittsburgh - The Pittsburgh Survey: Findings in Six Volumes*, New York: Survey Associates Inc, 1914, p. 36.

³⁵ 'Social Conditions in Pittsburg', *The Independent* (1848-1921) (New York), 66: 3138 (21 Jan 1908), p. 154-5.

³⁶ Roberts, 'Immigrant Wage Earners', p. 46-47.

³⁷ H. E. Rood, *The Company Doctor: An American Story*, New York: The Merriam Company, 1895, p. 198.

Sunday is the day for drinking. One man often drinks from 15 to 20 bottles, while when he drinks from the keg consumes from two to three gallons. The appalling size of these draughts is of course influenced by customs in the old country where beers are many times lighter than our intoxicating American brews. No social gathering is complete without drink. Marriages, baptisms, social occasions, holidays are all celebrated with beer and liquor. There is no good time and no friendship without it.³⁸

Henry Rood, an American doctor who strongly criticised the practices of Slovak-speaking mine workers that he encountered in Pennsylvania, highlighted the role of *pálenka/palinka*, the Hungarian form of the ubiquitous *schnapps* of central and eastern Europe within the migrant colony. An appalled Rood denounced this substance as ‘a fiery intoxicant, the principal ingredients of which are wood-alcohol and cayenne pepper. None but Slovaks and Polaks can drink this stuff, but they swallowed it by the beer-glassful. One drink of it ordinarily will make an American insane’.³⁹ In short, Slovak-speaking migrants tended to be both hard-workers and hard-drinkers: a trait that was subject to exaggeration by more temperate members of established, American society. Slovak migrant workers committed the bulk of their wages towards two chief goals: the remittance of wages to support their extended family in Upper Hungary and to pay off existing debts; and a substantial sum saved to take back from the United States to purchase a plot of arable land in the ‘old country’. The potential, monthly rate of savings for a Slovak labourer was estimated at \$10-15, with greater than \$300 of savings being sufficient for a migrant to consider returning to Upper Hungary to buy at least two acres of land.⁴⁰ Only long-term migrants in the United States, who had worked there for over fifteen years, could purchase larger estates of between twenty and twenty-five acres in the ‘old country’.⁴¹

³⁸ Roberts, ‘Immigrant Wage Earners’, p. 50.

³⁹ Rood, *The Company Doctor*, p. 198.

⁴⁰ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 80.

⁴¹ *Idem*.

Explanations for Slovak migration have often linked the nationalist politics of the political elites in Hungary to the actions of the masses in an unconvincing manner. Mass migration has been understood by some historians as forming a conscious, political response to the challenges that faced Slovak nationalists within the Kingdom of Hungary. Peter Pastor, for example, in tracing the dissolution of the Kingdom of Hungary argued that in the aftermath of high-profile clashes between the Hungarian state and Slovak-speaking citizens that 'such governmental reaction forced the Slovaks to choose between complete passivity or mass emigration, especially [to] the United States'.⁴² Alan Sked drew a similar conclusion, claiming that the cultural life of Slovaks in Hungary by 1914 'had come to a virtual standstill and the only hope available to Slovaks seeking an escape from Magyarisation was emigration'.⁴³ The term 'Magyarisation' referred to the assimilation of citizens from German, Slovak, Jewish or other minority groups into 'the Magyar nation' in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁴⁴ This assimilation was widely identified with the adoption of the Magyar language and an abandonment - at least in public life - of the German, Slovak or other non-Magyar language. From 1867, successive Hungarian governments vigorously promoted the Magyar language in administration and schooling as the basis for a future, 'Hungarian' nation-state; these policies were opposed in turn by Slovak and other minority nationalist movements.⁴⁵ By directly linking the Hungarian policy of Magyarisation to the practice of mass migration, historians such as Sked have accepted at face value the arguments of the Slovak nationalist leadership in Hungary, who presented the phenomenon as a response to political repression by the Hungarian state. The Slovak National Party's

⁴² P. Pastor, *Hungary Between Wilson and Lenin: The Hungarian Revolution of 1918-19 and the Big Three*, Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1976, p. 9.

⁴³ A. Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918*, London: Longman, 1989, p. 217.

⁴⁴ L. Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 283.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

newspaper, *Národné Noviny*, produced a commentary on emigration from Hungary in April 1900 asserting that ‘Magyarisation calls people across the ocean [...] for a Slovak today will find greater affection everywhere else than among the servants of Magyarisation in his own Slovak country. Thus Magyarisation is *a priori* persecuting, expelling and stimulating emigration’.⁴⁶ Another article from the same newspaper identified the pressure to assimilate as the chief cause of Slovak emigration, describing how Magyarisation ‘drives the people to despair [...] pauperises them materially, stultifies them morally, spoils and corrupts their character, removes all life’s pleasure [...] And then it is wondered why they flee and go away, taking with them their strength and labour as capital’.⁴⁷

While the mass migration of Slovak-speakers from Hungary was therefore viewed at the time and by some historians as a response to the suppression of Slovak nationhood under the Hungarian government, this political conflict almost certainly did not reflect the concerns of ordinary migrants. There are very few examples of Slovak-speakers who emigrated from the Kingdom of Hungary owing to explicitly political considerations. One of the most significant Slovak leaders in the United States, a Slovak newspaper editor and publisher named Peter Vít’azoslav Rovnianek, was indeed expelled from his theological studies in Budapest due to displaying Slovak nationalist sentiments, and soon travelled to the States.⁴⁸ Another unusual example of politically-motivated migration can be found in the biography of Nikolaj Kovač, a socialist leader who campaigned in the Slovak language among workers in the town of Prešov/Eperjes in Šariš County and was consequently prosecuted in the Hungarian courts as ‘a pan-Slav socialist’.⁴⁹ Kovač cited this trial as his

⁴⁶ *Národné Noviny* [Martin], 21 Apr. 1900, p. 1.

⁴⁷ *Národné Noviny*, 2 Dec. 1905, p. 1.

⁴⁸ R. Korbaš, ‘Peter Vít’azoslav Rovnianek’, in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 27, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2010, p. 114.

⁴⁹ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 10, inv. č. 102, porad. č. 345, ‘Nikolaj Kovač: životopisný dotazník, fotografia’, Pittsburgh, PA, 1936, 2jd/3s, f. 1.

motivation to leave for the United States in August 1901, where he would later contribute to the Slovak-language, socialist newspaper *Rovnosť Ludu* [Equality of the People] and other Slovak American newspapers.⁵⁰ These few examples are, however, dwarfed by the flow of half a million or so Slovak-speakers who left Upper Hungary in the decades before 1914 for whom nationalist political considerations could have played little role in their decision to leave. The total number of ‘nationally conscious’ Slovaks - a term used by the Slovak nationalist leadership to identify Slovak-speakers who expressed their national identity to be Slovak and supported the aims of the Slovak nationalist leadership - was reckoned to be no more than one thousand individuals at this time.⁵¹ Even if the criteria for Slovak ‘national consciousness’ were stretched to include all those who read Slovak-language periodicals in Upper Hungary - titles with an estimated circulation of fifty thousand per year in 1910 - this total would still not account for more than one-tenth of the total migration of Slovak-speakers to the United States during this period.⁵² The ideology held by a small group of nationalist intellectuals had little bearing on the lives of ordinary, Slovak-speakers in Upper Hungary and so it could not account for their decision to migrate to the United States.

The absence of Slovak nationalist ideology among most Slovak-speaking migrants was caused not only by the Slovak nationalists’ limited appeal to the masses, but also by the geographical divide between their political base and the principal sources of Slovak-speaking migrants in Upper Hungary. The leading source of Slovak migrants to the United States until 1914 were the counties of Spiš, Šariš and Zemplín/Zemplén - where transatlantic migration had first taken place in large numbers - as well as the neighbouring

⁵⁰ ‘Nikolaj Kováč: životopisný dotazník, fotografia’, f. 1.

⁵¹ V. Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko: Pamäti z Rokov, 1918-1920*, Vol. I, Prague: Čin, 1928, p. 183.

⁵² M. M. Stolárik, ‘The Role of the American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914-1918’, (University of Ottawa, MA Thesis, 1968), f. 17.

county of Abov-Turňa/Abaúj-Torna in north-eastern Upper Hungary. These four counties accounted for some two-thirds of all Slovak-speaking migration to the United States, despite representing just one-fifth of all counties of Upper Hungary where Slovak-speakers formed at least twenty percent of the population.⁵³ The high number of Slovak-speaking migrants from these four north-eastern counties was not due to an unusually large Slovak-speaking population in these areas. The heavy rate of Slovak migration from Zemplín County, for example, took place from a Slovak-speaking minority of 106,000 people, who made up just one-third of the county's nationally and religiously mixed population.⁵⁴ Only in Šariš county did exceptionally heavy Slovak-speaking migration occur in an area where Slovak-speakers formed even a bare majority of the county's population.⁵⁵ Transatlantic migration from the central and western counties of Upper Hungary such as Orava/Arva, Trenčín and Pressburg - where Slovak-speakers formed a greater share of the population - developed from the 1890s and did not occur at as high a rate as the 'eastern migration'.⁵⁶

The mass migration that took place from the north-eastern counties was the product of several, chiefly economic factors. Demand for larger plots of rural land was particularly high in these counties due to the marginal productivity of the soil and a local population boom that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ The region also had relatively small urban settlements like Prešov and Košice/Kassa, where the development of new industries was too gradual to absorb the bulk of a rapidly growing class of land-hungry and underemployed rural labourers.⁵⁸ The economic situation was therefore different to the

⁵³ Stolárík, 'Slovak Immigrants', p. 57; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, London: Archibald and Constable, 1908, p. 11.

⁵⁴ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 10; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 11.

⁵⁵ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 11.

⁵⁶ M. Majeriková-Molitoris, 'Americkí Slováci v Boji za Národné Práva Slovákov na Severnom Spiši a Hornej Orave', in D. Zemančík and Z. Pavelcová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 29, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2012, p. 96; Zecker, "All Our Own Kind Here", f. 44; f. 75-80.

⁵⁷ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 58; Majeriková-Molitoris, 'Americkí Slováci', p. 96.

⁵⁸ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 10; Majeriková-Molitoris, 'Americkí Slováci', p. 96.

western counties of Upper Hungary, where the larger urban centre of Pressburg absorbed an influx of Slovak-speakers from the surrounding countryside who worked in large-scale industries like the Nobel dynamite factory, established in the city from 1873.⁵⁹ The four north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary were also the site of an already long-established, seasonal migration, in which rural labourers typically travelled a relatively short distance south to collect the harvest in the intensively cultivated lower Tisza river valley in Hungary.⁶⁰ In addition to private forms of support, the Hungarian state directly organised the registration, employment terms and transportation of some 71,000 of these seasonal labourers from Upper Hungary and Transylvania in 1913; by which time an estimated 200,000 seasonal migrants took part in the harvest each year.⁶¹ As described by the historian Julianna Puskás, the seasonal migration of rural labourers from the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary ‘was a traditional and organic part of the economic system there’.⁶² The new economic opportunities available in the United States therefore fitted into the established social structure of a region of Hungary where labour migration was already the norm. This feature could also be seen in the migration between Upper Hungary and Budapest, where Slovak-speaking migrants became prominent in the construction industry for the rapidly expanding capital city - some 100,000 Slovaks migrated to Budapest between 1850 and 1900.⁶³ From the 1870s, transatlantic migration offered a new means of solving the familiar lack of local economic and land opportunities in the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary. The view of the ‘traditional’ peasant village as being an

⁵⁹ P. C. van Duin, *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, p. 89.

⁶⁰ C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors: The Treaty of Trianon and its Consequences, 1919-1937*, 2nd Ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 80-81; Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 44; Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 58.

⁶¹ Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors*, p. 80-81.

⁶² Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 58.

⁶³ O. V. Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938: Education and the Making of a Nation*, Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1985, p. 25; Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 45.

unchanging geographically isolated community - where individuals were generally born, lived and died within a few miles range - did not correspond with the reality of rural life during the second half of the nineteenth century. As the historian John Bodnar has described it, even the peasantry 'knew long before they even heard of America that people frequently had to migrate to meet economic realities'.⁶⁴ The United States served as a new destination for mass migration of Slovak-speakers from the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary, rather than representing a radical break from a geographically fixed livelihood.

This geographically unbalanced pattern of migration manifested itself in the new Slovak American colonies that were established in the United States and the initial attitudes of migrants towards the idea of Slovak nationhood. The records of a fraternal society lodge founded in Point Breeze, Philadelphia, for example, showed that some two-thirds of its membership came from the counties of Šariš and Zemplín alone between 1894 and 1915.⁶⁵ The demographic weight of this mass migration from so-called 'eastern Slovaks' limited the initial impact of Slovak nationalist ideas, for the traditional base of Slovak nationalist activism rested in the central Upper Hungarian county of Turiec/Turóc and the town of Turčianský Svätý Martin/Turócszentmárton (hereafter 'Martin'), which was far both in distance and in influence from the principal centres of Slovak-speaking migration.⁶⁶ Until 1900, activity of the Slovak National Party was practically non-existent in the four north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary. In these eastern counties, the Hungarian state instead openly promoted the use of the local, 'Šariš dialect' in school textbooks and state-funded publications to serve as a rival language to the standardised, Slovak form on which the

⁶⁴ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 43.

⁶⁵ United States, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies/Historical Society of Pennsylvania Archives [Balch Institute/HSP], M91-75, 'National Slovak Society, Assembly #170 (Point Breeze, Philadelphia, PA), Records, 1905-1955: Death Claim Records', ff 1-137.

⁶⁶ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 44.

Slovak National Party's political agenda was based.⁶⁷ Hungarian administrations at this time promoted the idea that the Slav population of Upper Hungary formed two distinct groups: the 'Slovaks' of western Upper Hungary and the 'Slovjaks' of the eastern counties, whose differences in speech and custom from the rest of Upper Hungary could form the basis of a distinct nationality.⁶⁸ One of the key goals of Slovak nationalists in the United States and in Upper Hungary at the turn of the twentieth century was to combat this idea, which they perceived to be an attempt by the Hungarian state to artificially divide their 'Slovak nation' and to weaken their political cause. Yet Slovak nationalist hostility to this distinction was undermined by the genuine absence of 'national consciousness' among the broad peasantry in the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary. As Carol Leff noted, this fact still confronted the compilers of the first Czechoslovak state census in 1920, whose respondents in the new territory of Slovakia 'were still prone to offer regionally, or religiously defined self-identifications to the census-takers, or even such politically unappetizing monstrosities as "Magyar-Slovak"'.⁶⁹ As studies of early Slovak American communities like that of Robert Zecker have also shown, migrants from these counties typically brought with them and retained in the United States distinct, regional identities rather than a sense of 'Slovakness' as a national identity. Migrants were far more likely to identify themselves as 'Hricovats', 'Hutoroks', 'Šarišans' and countless other local and county affiliations, that were bound up with the economic and personal links shared by local peasant settlements in Upper Hungary.⁷⁰ Works by historians such as these, focusing

⁶⁷ A. Špiesz and D. Čaplovič, *Illustrated Slovak History: A Struggle for Sovereignty in Central Europe*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2006, p. 150-51.

⁶⁸ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 331; I. Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism and National Identity, 1918-1920: Manifestations of the National Identity of Slovaks*, Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1999, p. 109.

⁶⁹ C. S. Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 18; Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 80.

⁷⁰ Zecker, "All Our Own Kind Here", f. 18-19; Alexander, 'The Immigrant Church and Community', f. 202-204.

on how ‘Slovak-speakers’ - rather than ‘Slovaks’ as a self-identifying, national group - in fact migrated to the United States inform this present study of how transatlantic Slovak nationalism developed. Their more nuanced understanding stands in contrast to the chiefly political interpretation of Slovak-speaking migration that has long been offered by historians of the Habsburg Empire. A. J. P. Taylor’s assertion, for example, that ‘Slovaks [...] took with them to America their national culture they were not allowed to develop in Europe’ cannot be sustained, given the almost complete absence of Slovak ‘national consciousness’ among the local population and rural, labourer social class that formed the bulk of the transatlantic migration.⁷¹

The efforts of Slovak American leaders to foster Slovak ‘national consciousness’ within the growing communities of Slovak-speaking migrants were stimulated by the fact that transatlantic migration was rarely intended to be either one-way or lasting. Slovak-speaking migrants were more likely to return to the Kingdom of Hungary than to settle in the United States: a fact that underlines the importance that economic and social advancement in the ‘old country’ had to their decision to migrate. Edward Steiner, a prominent writer about the ‘new immigration’ to the United States - and himself an emigrant of mixed Jewish origin from Upper Hungary - observed this phenomenon during his time spent studying passengers on incoming migrant ships, noting that ‘in conversation with the men I can never go beyond the facts that they are going to work, earn money, pay off a mortgage on a piece of land at home, or save enough money to send for Katchka or Anna to be their wedded wife. If the Slovak feels any great emotions when he reaches New York, he never expresses them’.⁷² When the economy of Pittsburgh and other industrial centres of the United States suffered a brief but serious slump in 1907-08, return migration

⁷¹ Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 202.

⁷² Steiner, ‘The Slovak and the Pole in America’, p. 556.

to Europe among Slovak and other foreign migrant workers greatly increased.⁷³ The *New York Times* concluded that the groups ‘were frightened at the thought of not making money all the time in the country they had visited for no other purpose’.⁷⁴ Precise statistics detailing return migration from the United States are not available for this period, but the limited migration records existing between 1908 and 1910 found that 58 Slovaks were returning to Hungary for every 100 Slovaks emigrating to the United States: a rate of return comparable to similar southern and eastern European migrant groups.⁷⁵ Of Slovak-speakers admitted to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, some 19% had migrated to the country at least once previously: a rate of not just return but repeat transatlantic migration only surpassed by migrants from Britain and Spain.⁷⁶ Perhaps the most extreme example of this practice in the historical record was a Slovak-speaking tinker named Martin Chalan, who travelled between Trenčín County in Upper Hungary and the United States some twenty-six times in this period.⁷⁷ A report in *The New York Times* registered broader American concern about return migration at the time, observing that:

The men of this class might be called chronic immigrants. They come here with no intent of remaining, go back to spend the money, and return again when there are jobs in sight. So swift have the ocean liners and railroad trains become, so low are their rates of passage, and so meagre the expenses of the alien labourer in America, that an Italian or Hungarian can come here, pocket his wages, and go to Europe to spend it.⁷⁸

The proceeds of successful Slovak-speaking migrants often returned to Upper Hungary in the form of remittances. The total sum of remitted money from the

⁷³ J. R. Commons and W. M. Leiserson, ‘Wage-Earners of Pittsburgh’, in P. U. Kellogg (ed.) *Wage-Earning Pittsburgh*, p. 118.

⁷⁴ ‘Interesting Study of Ellis Island Records...’, *New York Times*, 8 Dec 1907, p. SM6.

⁷⁵ ‘Table 52: Immigrant Aliens Admitted to the United States, Emigrant Aliens Departed, and Number Departed for every 100 Admitted, Fiscal Years 1908, 1909 and 1910, By Race or People’, *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 383.

⁷⁶ ‘Table 37 - Number and Per Cent of Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1899 to 1910 inclusive, Who Had Been in the United States Previously, By Race or People’, *Ibid.*, p. 359.

⁷⁷ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 42.

⁷⁸ ‘Interesting Study of Ellis Island Records...’, *New York Times*, 8 Dec 1907, p. SM6.

United States to Hungary as a whole was estimated at 50 million Hungarian crowns per year in 1900 (roughly \$10 million or £2 million), a sum that increased fourfold by the eve of the First World War.⁷⁹ Remittances were used to pay off debts accrued by members of the extended family household in the ‘old country’, but were also invested in some modest forms of agricultural improvement, including new forms of machinery as well as the acquisition of larger plots of land.⁸⁰ Migrants also brought with them new habits, fashions and ways of living on their return to Upper Hungary. Edward Steiner’s account of having witnessed one of the first groups of Slovak-speaking migrants to have returned from the United States in 1878 illustrates how significant a contrast these returnees made with those who had remained behind. He wrote in an American magazine how:

I saw the first Slavic emigrants returning to their native country from America; about a dozen stalwart men stepped from a third-class railway carriage at Oderberg [Bohumin][...] A large delegation of peasants awaited the travellers, and had they stepped from paradise they could not have been received with greater awe. Their trunks, their clothes, and, above all, their huge silver watches and heavy chains, were viewed by the crowd, which asked all manner of questions and received but scant replies, for our Slovak men were travelled men and rich and could not be spoken to by every Yan [sic], Martzin [sic] and Pavel... These first venturesome peasants came from the most impoverished and crowded portions of Hungary, populated by Poles and Slovaks, and the wealth they brought with them was real wealth, which incited others to leave home a while to gather the dollars on the other side of the Atlantic.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 77.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁸¹ Steiner, ‘The Slovak and the Pole’, p. 555.

Steiner was describing the emergence of a new group in Upper Hungarian society: the so-called *boháci* or 'rich men' - ordinary rural labourers who returned from the United States with wealth and status symbols that far outstripped those who had stayed behind.⁸²

Not all return voyages to the 'old country' proved as auspicious as the scene described in Steiner's account though. Take the case of Ján Beharka, a Slovak-speaking migrant from Liptov County, Upper Hungary, who in 1900 migrated to the United States at the age of 25 having attempted with little success to provide for his wife and extended family as a cabinet-maker in both Upper Hungary and Budapest.⁸³ Having found secure employment at a brick-making factory in Monaca, Pennsylvania, Beharka sent for his wife and children to join him in the United States in 1903.⁸⁴ The Beharka family then returned to their native village of Pribylina in October 1907 with the aim of establishing themselves once more in the 'old country'.⁸⁵ This attempt proved unsuccessful however, and the Beharka family moved back to Monaca in 1909, with Ján Beharka citing a lack of economic opportunities and the attitudes of both grasping locals and dismissive Magyar-speaking officials towards the family as reasons for their return to the United States.⁸⁶ In the experience of the Beharka family, their act of migration and the expectation of wealth changed the way that they were viewed by their village peers and highlighted Ján Beharka as a potential threat to the authority of the local Hungarian officials. One of the most visible and enduring legacies of the widespread return migration of Slovak-speakers to their home villages was in architecture. Some of the returnees used their funds to build so-called 'American houses' - large properties built using stone and brick in the style of their

⁸² G. C. Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision: Slovak American Viewpoints towards Compatriots and the Homeland from 1914 to 1915, as Viewed by the Slovak Language Press in Pennsylvania*, London: Associated University Press, 1995, p. 34.

⁸³ Balch Institute/HSP, SC112, 'Autobiography of John Beharka', [1917], f. 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 8-9.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 9.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 10-11.

former host state that stood in stark contrast to the traditional dwellings of wooden logs and straw thatch.⁸⁷ As Elena Jakešová has pointed out, however, not all return migrants introduced new forms of habits to their home villages: in the more isolated rural settlements, return migrants often readapted to traditional customs.⁸⁸ The impact of return migration was nevertheless considerable in many rural settlements in Upper Hungary and resulted from the fact that transatlantic migration was a continuous process rather than a decisive event. The intensive rate and regular flow of Slovak-speaking migrants to and from the United States meant that return migration had a continuous, gradual effect on everyday life in the ‘old country’ over the course of two generations before the First World War.⁸⁹

The practice of return migration underlined the temporary, wealth-generating purpose that migration to the United States had for most Slovak-speaking migrants. Yet return migration also provides a better insight into the role and salience of nationalist activism within Slovak American communities. Rather than being a permanently resident community of economic or political emigres, the practice of return migration meant that Slovak American communities regularly hosted the arrival and departure of itinerant migrants to and from the homeland, as well as between different American towns. The example of Juraj Matey, a Slovak-speaking migrant from Šariš County, Upper Hungary, illustrates this phenomenon. Between his arrival in New York at the age of sixteen in February 1881 and permanently settling in Philadelphia in 1885, Matey moved nine times in search of both better work and friends and family members who had emigrated from the old country, including a return migration from Minneapolis to Pennsylvania after failing to

⁸⁷ E. Jakešová, ‘The Impact of Emigrants and Reemigrants on Slovak Society (1880s - 1920s)’, *Društvena istraživanja. Časopis za opća društvena pitanja*, 33-34 (1998), p. 30.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, ‘The Impact of Emigrants’, p. 32-33.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

find suitable employment.⁹⁰ Such itinerant movement by Slovak migrants cannot be captured by the snapshot of official census records, but is key to understanding the role of return and repeat migration in stimulating nationalist activism.⁹¹ The prominent theorist of nationalism Anthony Smith has labelled the role frequently played by émigré groups abroad as ‘vicarious nationalism’ - a political campaign conducted on behalf of a rhetorically suppressed national movement in the ‘old country’. Smith describes how ‘an ethnic minority, or fragment, having renounced the quest for nation status or a nation-state for itself, desires it on behalf of another, 'sister-fragment' or for its own core community[...] In each case, their 'vicarious nationalism' helps to compensate for their own self-transformations during and after immigration and the consequent partial loss of their ethnic heritage and institutions’.⁹² Rather than advocating for the national rights of their ethnic kinsmen in the old country in this detached manner, the practice of return migration meant that many Slovak Americans retained a stake in the economic, social and political conditions of Hungary. They sought to return there themselves. Transatlantic migration was rarely viewed as a permanent and decisive change in the lives of ordinary Slovak-speaking migrants. They were not as detached from the ‘old country’ as popular representations of the ‘new immigration’ of impoverished southern and eastern European migrants would suggest. While these migrants had little knowledge of Slovak nationalist politics in their original homeland, the practice of return migration gave Slovak nationalist agitators within the migrant colonies an opportunity to appeal to the economic, social and, in time, political aspirations that ordinary Slovak-speakers still attached to Upper Hungary. The widespread desire to return to the ‘old country’ made the development of nationalist

⁹⁰ Fond KSZ, č. šk 10, inv. č. 102, porad. č. 349, ‘Juraj Matey: životopis a obálka’, f. 1-12.

⁹¹ The itinerant movement of Slovaks who came to live in Pittsburgh was also noted by studies of the immigrant community at the time. See A. B. Koukol, ‘A Slav's A Man For A' That’ in Kellogg (ed.) *Wage-Earning Pittsburgh*, p. 64.

⁹² A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 151.

sentiment and agitation a more likely, though not inevitable outcome within Slovak American migrant colonies at the turn of the twentieth century.

The desire of Slovak-speaking migrants to return to the old country was not limited to ordinary workers, but also extended to many of the leaders of Slovak American institutions. Return migrants included the likes of Ignác Gessay, who migrated from Orava County in 1899 and rose to become the chief editor of several prominent Slovak newspapers in the following two decades.⁹³ Gessay then returned to Europe after the First World War as part of a Slovak American delegation to the newly created Czecho-Slovak state.⁹⁴ Gessay remained in Slovakia until his death in 1928, helping to establish a newspaper entitled *Americký Slovák* (The American Slovak) that targeted a readership among those who wished to return to Slovakia from the United States.⁹⁵ Gessay was joined by Anton Ambrose, a Slovak-speaker from Šariš County, who had emigrated to the United States in 1882 at the age of fifteen.⁹⁶ Ambrose became a businessman and a prominent early publisher of the Slovak American press; he also served as president of the National Slovak Society in the United States, a leading Slovak fraternal organisation, for a full decade before the First World War.⁹⁷ Ambrose migrated to the Czechoslovak Republic after the war, where he remained active in commercial life and agitated for Slovak American organisations to provide political support to the new state.⁹⁸ Ambrose's

⁹³ Z. Pavelcová, 'V Spomienkach na Život a Dielo Ignáca Gessaya (1874-1928)', in Z. Pavelcová (ed.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 31, 2015, p. 40-44.

⁹⁴ *Idem*.

⁹⁵ United States, Minnesota, Minneapolis, Immigration History Research Center Archives [IHRCA], Box SLK-60, (Slovak) Periodicals, VI-ZA, *Americký Slovák*, č. 8 (Dec. 1920), p. 1; Pavelcová, 'Ignáca Gessaya', p. 45-46; Jakešová, 'The Impact of Emigrants', p. 34.

⁹⁶ Slovak Institute, 'Personalities File, Ambrose, A. Š, 1867-1941', J. Paučo, 'Anton. Š. Ambrose', Cleveland, OH: Catholic Union, 1970, p. 1.

⁹⁷ Paučo, 'Anton. Š. Ambrose', p. 1; Balch Institute/HSP, 'National Slovak Society, National Records, 1915-1974. Box 2, Jubilee Book, 50th Anniversary, 2/3', *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1940*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlač Narodných Novín, 1940, p. 34, p. 79.

⁹⁸ Slovak Institute, 'Personalities File, Ambrose, A. Š, 1867-1941', A. Š. Ambrose, 'Pravda zvíťazila', [1923], ff. 1-4; Paučo, 'Anton. Š. Ambrose', p. 1; *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 80.

immediate successor as president of the National Slovak Society Albert Mamatey - who acted as a key political leader of Slovak American groups during the First World War - had abandoned his own plans to return to Hungary in 1905 upon receiving an assistant professorship at Pittsburgh's engineering college.⁹⁹ While not joining other Slovak American leaders in returning to Europe, Mamatey instead conducted lengthy trips to Upper Hungary before the First World War to consult with Slovak nationalist leaders in the 'old country', before visiting the new, Czecho-Slovak state with similar objectives in 1919-1920.¹⁰⁰ The practice of return migration thus added a crucial dynamic to the practice of nationalism within the Slovak American community in this period. Rather than campaigning on behalf of Slovak nationalists in their detached homeland, as Smith's view of 'vicarious nationalism' implies, Slovak Americans were instead active participants both in shaping the idea of Slovak nationalism and in determining its specific, political goals. The decision of several prominent Slovak nationalist leaders like Gessay and Anton Ambrose to return to their homeland, once situated within a Czechoslovak state, represented a logical conclusion to their own nationalist convictions and deeds in the United States.

The nature of Slovak-speaking migration was shaped as much by views of migration held by the Hungarian and American governments at the turn of the twentieth century as by internal features such as the geographical disparity and patterns of return that have been set out in this chapter. The transatlantic exchange of people - and consequently remitted funds, information and political ideas - was made possible by the relatively liberal view of migration that prevailed on both sides of the Atlantic between 1870 and 1920. On

⁹⁹ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 441, poč. č. 19, Albert Mamatey to Pavol Blaho, Braddock, PA, 7 Oct. 1905, f. 1.

¹⁰⁰ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 441, poč. č. 19, Albert Mamatey to Pavol Blaho, Martin, 13 Oct. 1912, f. 1; SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 13 inv. č. 678, poč. č. 27 Telegram Albert Mamatey to Vavro Šrobár, On ship 'Imperator', 23 Dec. 1919, 37/13a/2.

one side of the process, successive Hungarian governments took a relaxed view of the mass exodus of its rural population over two generations. Following the Austro-Hungarian 'Compromise' of 1867 Hungarian politics was dominated by the Liberal party of Kálmán Tisza.¹⁰¹ Typically secure in its parliamentary majority, the governing Liberal party in Budapest maintained an open-door approach to emigration from Hungary in the face of protests from county officials on the periphery. Mass migration first emerged as a political issue in 1879, when a local Hungarian official in Šariš county complained to the county's vice-governor that local, Slovak-speaking rural labourers were leaving 'en masse' for the United States.¹⁰² Alarmed landowners in the counties of Šariš and Zemplín - whose estates depended on a ready supply of seasonal farm labour to collect the harvest - soon petitioned the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest, calling for a bar on further emigration from the country.¹⁰³ The Hungarian government responded with a bill in 1881 that required emigration agents to possess a licence to operate in the country, but did little to impinge on the free right of a Hungarian citizen to emigrate.¹⁰⁴ The local county authorities in north-eastern Hungary petitioned successive Hungarian Parliaments to impose greater restrictions, but in the absence of meaningful action from the central state took their own measures to try and curb migration.¹⁰⁵ The county of Zemplín, for example, passed a law that obliged migrants to seek permission from local officials prior to leaving the county; those who failed to do so risked arrest and were subject to fines or imprisonment.¹⁰⁶ The neighbouring county of Spiš declared both the enticement of migration as well as the

¹⁰¹ A. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 97.

¹⁰² Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 22.

¹⁰³ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 93.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

lending of money to enable workers to leave the area to be criminal offences; its officials further pressured the police to arrest all emigrants found without passports.¹⁰⁷

While such measures reflected the concerns of the local, predominantly Magyar-speaking and landholding, political elite in the eastern parts of Upper Hungary, action at the county level did little to prevent the exodus. In the 1900s the rate of migration peaked in the county of Zemplín despite the attempts of county officials to curb practice.¹⁰⁸ The decision of the central government to not intervene in the matter was explained to a degree by their liberal approach to an individual's right to migrate from Hungary, but also stemmed from more cynical calculations. As Julianna Puskás has shown, internal government reports countered regular complaints and petitions by identifying mass migration as a means of relieving social and economic pressures in the peripheral, rural counties of Hungary.¹⁰⁹ The larger proportion of non-Magyar speakers among Hungarian migrants was also identified in Budapest as a political benefit of the outflow.¹¹⁰ Although many Magyar-speakers also took part in the exodus and established what became known as the 'Hungarian American' community, Slovak and German-speakers as well as Ruthenians were overrepresented in the overall flow of emigration.¹¹¹ In the case of Slovak-speakers, their share of annual migration from Hungary was typically double their share of the Hungarian population.¹¹² The government's aim of 'Magyarising' the multinational population, in order to form a nation-state on the basis of a common Magyar language, could therefore be furthered by the decision of many non-Magyar speakers to leave for the United States, as much as through assimilation in the education, administrative and judicial

¹⁰⁷ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 95.

¹⁰⁸ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 96.

¹¹⁰ *Idem.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹¹² *Idem.*

systems of Hungary. By 1910, the share of Magyar-speakers in the population of Hungary exceeded the government's symbolic target of 50%, an outcome that was made possible by the mass migration of hundreds of thousands of migrants.¹¹³ Successive Hungarian governments were therefore rather comfortable with the prospect of hundreds of thousands of citizens leaving from the largely peripheral counties of the state. These areas had social problems that the state could not easily solve and whose population contained many of the 'minority nationalities' that presented an obstacle to building a Magyar-Hungarian nation-state.

Hungarian emigration policy formally shifted towards ideas of controlling the flow of emigrants from the turn of the twentieth century, but the relaxed attitude of state officials towards the practice limited its effect on the mass migration. The Hungarian Parliament finally addressed the concerns of many landholders and county officials in the regions of mass migration by introducing emigration controls in a 1903 bill.¹¹⁴ The aim of the law, as described by Hungarian Commissioner of Emigration Louis Levay de Kistelek, was 'to prevent emigration and to protect people from the fever of emigration, as well as providing measures for 'securing the moral and material interests of those persons who have finally made up their minds to emigrate'.¹¹⁵ In addition to further curbs on the activity of emigration agents, the law obliged migrants to obtain passports with a stated destination of travel prior to leaving the country.¹¹⁶ Tara Zahra argues that the Hungarian emigration law served as a template for similar measures adopted by interwar states, including Czechoslovakia, that effectively restricted mass migration from central and eastern

¹¹³ P. A. Hanebrink, *In Defence of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism and Anti-Semitism, 1890-1944*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006, p. 11.

¹¹⁴ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 96-97.

¹¹⁵ L. de Levay, 'The Hungarian Emigration Law', *North American Review* (Boston, MA), 182: 590 (Jan. 1906), p. 118.

¹¹⁶ T. Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World*, New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016, p. 38.

Europe.¹¹⁷ The impact of the bill on Hungarian mass migration before the war was negligible though. Rather than alleviating the so-called ‘fever of emigration’ in Hungary the years after the passage of the bill saw mass migration reach its peak. The annual rate of Slovak-speaking migration peaked in 1905 when some fifty-thousand entered the United States.¹¹⁸ More than forty thousand more came in 1907 when the highest ever number of migrants from Austria-Hungary to the United States was recorded: nearly 340,000 individuals.¹¹⁹ The Hungarian emigration bill did little to prevent this surge of mass migration, as its measures were loosely and “arbitrarily” enforced by state officials.¹²⁰ Once again, this attitude could be traced to the contradictory aims of the Hungarian government towards migration. The Hungarian state attempted to divert the economic proceeds of carrying migrant passengers from the German ports of Hamburg and Bremen to its own port of Fiume (modern-day Rijeka in Croatia). In order to do so, the Hungarian state enticed the Cunard shipping company to establish a regular service between Fiume and New York from November 1903 – at the same time as its own emigration law was being implemented.¹²¹ The terms of the deal promised Cunard a minimum of thirty thousand, third class passengers migrating from Hungary per year, with the Hungarian government compensating the shipping firm with one hundred crowns for every passenger beneath that figure.¹²² Through this combination of liberal individualism, nationalistic state building and cynical economic opportunism, Hungarian governments acquiesced in the mass migration of many of its citizens in the decades before the outbreak of the First World

¹¹⁷ Zahra, *The Great Departure*, p. 39.

¹¹⁸ ‘Table 11: Number of Immigrants Admitted, Fiscal Years 1899-1910, by Race or People’, in *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 46.

¹¹⁹ Idem; ‘Table 9: Immigration to the United States, 1820-1910, Continued - Part 2: By Country of Origin and by Sex, for Years Ending June 30 1869 to 1910, Inclusive’, in *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 30-43.

¹²⁰ Zahra, *The Great Departure*, p. 39.

¹²¹ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 98.

¹²² Ibid., p. 99-100.

War. The relaxed attitude of leading Hungarian Liberal politicians like Kálmán Tisza towards mass migration helped to form a second centre of the Slovak nationalist movement in the United States, that in time undermined Tisza's policies of 'Magyarisation' of the Slovak-speaking minority and contributed to the breakup of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1918.

The mass transatlantic migration of Slovak-speakers was also dependent on a benevolent attitude towards immigration prevailing in the United States. There were few significant barriers to the movement of European migrants to and from the United States until the 1920s, a fact that shaped the development of intense transatlantic links between the Slovak American community and Slovak-speakers living in the 'old country'. The Bureau of Immigration, created by the U.S. central government in 1864, was initially created to bring a larger flow of European immigrants to the country due to labour shortages that were experienced during and after the American Civil War.¹²³ Over subsequent decades, the U.S. Congress established measures to deny entry to criminals, polygamists and immigrants with contagious diseases or whose lack of funds led to them being considered 'a public charge'.¹²⁴ The *New York Times* for example reported in 1910 how a young Slovak-speaking couple had been broken up by the action of immigration officials at Ellis Island. Both were described as 'practically penniless' on arrival, but the young woman, Mariana, was granted entry into the United States after receiving a sum of \$20 sent from her brother who was living in Pennsylvania.¹²⁵ Her unmarried partner Ján was, however, barred on the grounds of having insufficient funds to support himself.¹²⁶ The

¹²³ B. Mullan, 'The Regulation of International Migration: The US and Western Europe in Historical Comparative Perspective', in A. Böcker et. al. (eds.), *Regulation of Migration: International Experiences*, Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1998, p. 30.

¹²⁴ *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 366.

¹²⁵ 'Parted at Country's Gate', *New York Times*, 12 Dec. 1910, p. 2.

¹²⁶ *Idem*.

newspaper described how ‘the protestations of Mariana that Ján had used his savings to aid her in coming here received no heed. For an hour, the two young people conferred, amid tears, as to the best course of action to pursue. She wanted to return with Ján to Austria [sic], but he advised against it’.¹²⁷ Their plight was however experienced by a tiny fraction of Slovak-speaking immigrants: just over two thousand were denied entry at Ellis Island and other U.S. ports between 1899 and 1910.¹²⁸

The development of an intense, transatlantic patterns of repeat and return migration among Slovak-speakers could only occur in the context of liberal immigration policy in the United States, a stance that did not long survive the First World War. The U.S. Congress passed new laws in 1921 and 1924 that set an annual quota on immigration according to nationality. The measures were consciously designed to limit immigration from southern and eastern Europe: a category in which Slovaks (as well as Czechs) found themselves, in contrast to ‘desirable’ migrants from the British Isles, Scandinavia and other parts of northern and western Europe.¹²⁹ By setting its quota according to the 1890 U.S. census records, the 1924 Immigration Act excluded an entire generation of Slovak-speaking migrants from its calculation of the Czechoslovak quota.¹³⁰ In 1921, prior to the first quota restrictions being enacted, 28,000 Slovaks left the new Czechoslovak Republic for the United States (a figure that was similar to the pre-war rate of migration). By 1925 the entire Czechoslovak state had been awarded a quota for barely three thousand of its citizens, of whom just 398 Slovaks were able legally to migrate to the United States.¹³¹ The flow of

¹²⁷ ‘Parted at Country’s Gate’, *New York Times*, 12 Dec. 1910, p. 2.

¹²⁸ ‘Table 44: Number of Aliens Debarred from the United States, Fiscal Years 1899-1910, by Race or People’, *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3*, p. 371.

¹²⁹ P. S. Boyer (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 365.

¹³⁰ Idem; J. G. Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. 2004, p. 74-75.

¹³¹ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 35.

migration decreased to an extent but was largely channelled to new destinations such as Canada, Western Europe and even South America.¹³²

Two key aspects of the transatlantic migration of Slovak-speakers were permanently altered in the interwar years. Firstly, migration now became a chiefly permanent and one-way event for those who left Europe, rather than forming a temporary, and often repeated or reversed, phase in the lives of ordinary Slovak-speakers. The strict limits on legal migration to the United States meant that it was no longer practical for the masses to leave, while those who had secured their legal status to migrate were less likely to view a return to the ‘old country’ as a desirable outcome. U.S. immigration restrictions in the 1920s meant, as noted by Elena Jakešová, that ‘American Slovaks had to finally decide where they wanted to live. The majority of them stayed in the U.S.A., which ended the post-war process of re-emigration [to Czechoslovakia]’.¹³³ While some Slovaks in the United States no doubt still dreamed of living in their homeland, the fact that there was a vanishingly small prospect of returning to America should they feel discontented with life in Czechoslovakia was an understandable psychological barrier. As Tara Zahra’s recent work has also explained, Slovak-speakers also faced restrictions from the interwar Czechoslovak authorities on migration from that state. Increased state contributions to the education and welfare of its citizens in the interwar period, which led governments to protect their ‘investment’ from being sent abroad.¹³⁴ Slovak-speakers were also viewed by Czechoslovak authorities as politically loyal and nationally desirable citizens, in contrast to

¹³² C. Baláž, ‘Československá Vystřahovatelcká Politika v Rokoch 1918-1939’, in Pavelcová (ed.), *Slováci v Zahraníčí*, Vol. 31, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2015, p. 52; J. Gellner and J. Smerek, *The Czechs and Slovaks in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968, p. 74-75; Zahra, *The Great Departure*, p. 120, p. 122, p. 131.

¹³³ Jakešová, ‘The Impact of Emigrants’, p. 37.

¹³⁴ Zahra, *The Great Departure*, p. 109-110.

the substantial German, Magyar and Polish-speaking minorities of that state.¹³⁵ On these grounds, the Czechoslovak Council of Ministers subsequently declared in 1921 that ‘emigration of the very healthy Slovak population [...] threatens the Republic’ and resolved that the government would ‘stop at nothing to ensure that this emigration is reduced to the smallest level possible’.¹³⁶ The era in which Slovak-speaking migrants crossed the Atlantic with relative ease was ended by restrictive migration policies after the First World War. These measures did little to address the social and economic problems that had led so many Slovak-speakers to leave their homeland, but instead contained the bulk of Slovak citizens within the frontiers of Czechoslovak state. It was left to successive Czechoslovak governments to resolve the causes of mass migration in Slovakia through measures like land reform and industrial development, without the continued outlet of migration to ease social pressures during a turbulent, interwar economic cycle.

The sudden dearth of new migrants joining the Slovak-American migrant colony also brought about a profound change in the attitude of its organisational leadership. Rather than being closely attached to homeland causes through the intensive flow of people, funds and political ideas between themselves and the ‘old country’, Slovaks living in the United States became a group far closer in their activities and attitudes to what Anthony Smith identified as ‘vicarious nationalism’.¹³⁷ While political groups like the Slovak League of America campaigned for autonomy for Slovakia within the Czechoslovak state, they were now campaigning largely on behalf of their countrymen rather than for their own direct interests. Migrant leaders also had to address their community’s assimilation into wider American cultural life which, as Josef Barton has pointed out, was greatly accelerated by

¹³⁵ Zahra, *The Great Departure*, p. 111.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Zahra, *The Great Departure*, p. 106.

¹³⁷ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 149-150.

the restrictions on immigration.¹³⁸ As second and third generations of the migrant colony were born and raised in the United States, the value of learning the English language over Slovak as a priority increased, while the future of the Slovak fraternal organisations was tied to securing these subsequent generations through initiatives such as youth wings of their organisation.¹³⁹ These issues grew in importance as the direct stake of Slovak American leaders in the affairs of the ‘old country’ waned during the interwar period. Lacking a substantial influx of new migrants, its leaders had largely to accommodate integration as part of a ‘melting-pot’ process, in which a permanent ‘Slovak-American’ community within the United States was formed from the mobile Slovak-speaking migrant colony that existed before the First World War.

The nature of Slovak-speaking migration at the turn of the twentieth century explains how a distinctly transatlantic Slovak national movement first developed, and then declined in significance in the 1920s. One of the most important features of the transatlantic migration might on the surface seem counter-intuitive to the development of Slovak nationalism. The bulk of Slovak-speaking migrants were not ‘nationally conscious’ Slovaks, as some nationalist intellectuals both at the time and in Slovak nationalist historiography have assumed; rather, they had little attachment to the idea of Slovak nationhood before arriving in the United States. Regional identities prevailed among a migrant group who for social and economic reasons predominantly came from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary, where Slovak nationalist activity was practically non-existent in the nineteenth century. The extensive practice of return migration to Upper Hungary among Slovak-speaking migrants did however provide a key opening for Slovak nationalists working within the emerging Slovak American colony from the 1880s. While

¹³⁸ Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, p. 3.

¹³⁹ Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism*, p. 89, p. 94-95.

Slovak migrants did not initially migrate for political reasons, the intention of many migrants to return to the 'old country' meant that they retained a personal stake in the economic and political conditions of Upper Hungary. The intention of many Slovak-speakers to return to their homeland gave greater meaning to the conditions of Upper Hungary for both ordinary workers in the Pennsylvania coal mines and for journalists and organisational leaders like Anton Ambrose and Albert Mamatey. This was a resource that could be used by the Slovak nationalist agitators within the migrant community to lend greater significance to their cause. It was incumbent on Slovak nationalists operating within the Slovak migrant communities in the United States to turn their retained interest in homeland affairs into support for Slovak nationalist causes: this process occurred only gradually and after repeated setbacks.

Chapter 3: Generating Slovak Nationhood in the United States: The Slovak American Press and Fraternal Organisations

A firm sense of Slovak nationhood was not transported to the United States by most Slovak-speaking migrants. It was instead generated through a set of institutions, based on Slovak-language use, that were formed within the migrant colony in the late 1880s. These Slovak American institutions typically originated from practical concerns rather than from nationalist, political motives. The origin of the Slovak-language press in the United States, for example, stemmed from the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Pittsburgh, which sought to communicate news about events in the ‘old country’ to migrants. This fact provides a lesson in unintended consequences: given how the Slovak American press developed into one of the fiercest critics of the imperial regime. Within a few years of the emergence of a commercially viable Slovak-language press, the content of these migrant papers was taken in a new and consciously nationalist direction by a rising set of leaders in the Slovak American colony. Nationalist leaders such as Peter Rovnianek - the controversial publishing, financial and fraternal society oligarch of the Slovak American colony – succeeded in replacing the dialect forms of language that were most familiar to the bulk of Slovak-speaking migrants with the literary language of the Slovak nationalist elite. In a similar manner, fraternal benefit societies were formed by Slovak-speaking migrants to provide basic forms of welfare, that were then merged into nationwide fraternal organisations such as the ‘National Slovak Society’ and the ‘First Catholic Slovak Union’ (hereafter ‘Catholic Union’). The structure of these fraternal societies allowed migrants to maintain the distinct, regional and local forms of identity that they had taken with them from Upper Hungary within local branches of the society, while also cultivating a broader form of identity through their nationwide organisation of Slovak-speakers. The

standardised, Slovak literary language formed the basis of the claim to Slovak nationhood in Hungary, but it only became a shared, transatlantic feature between the Slovak migrant colony in the United States and Slovak nationalists at home due to the conscious intervention of a few nationalist leaders of the migrant colony. The development of a transatlantic Slovak national movement depended on the form that the migrant press and the fraternal societies took on from the late 1880s. By generating a sense of common Slovak nationhood among migrants, these institutions made possible the entry of Slovak American organisations into the wider national movement.

The Slovak American community was chiefly distinguished both from other migrant groups and the English-speaking population of the United States by three major institutions: Slovak Christian churches; Slovak fraternal organisations and the Slovak language press. The perceived need of religious provision for Slovak-speakers in the United States - with migrants consisting of a Catholic majority with substantial Lutheran and Greek Catholic minorities - was the most widespread cause of organisation, fundraising and popular agitation.¹ Churches for Slovak-speakers of each denomination had to be built using funds collected from campaigns within the Slovak migrant community. Another prominent cause of agitation were conflicts that emerged between Catholic, Slovak-speaking congregations and the existing, U.S. Catholic Church hierarchy on the selection of parish priests.² While the affairs of the respective Christian churches and local Slovak parishes were of great importance to the Slovak American community in everyday life, these religious institutions typically did not play an independent role in the development of political nationalism, which is the focus of this study. The local struggles

¹ J. J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 71; J. Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987, p. 148.

² M. M. Stolárik, 'Slovak Immigrants Come to Terms With Religious Diversity in North America', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96: 1 (Jan. 2010), p. 62-63; Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 150.

of individual Slovak religious congregations were taken up by the other two leading sectors of Slovak organisational life, the fraternal organisations and the press. These were the institutions that typically determined the wider, political significance of church disputes or building projects. Slovak parish churches were often built with the help of funds raised by local chapters of the nationwide, Slovak fraternal society; the two largest such fraternal organisations pooled their resources to build the first Slovak church in Pittsburgh, Saint Elizabeth's, which was consecrated in October 1895.³ Conflicts between Slovak parishioners and the Catholic hierarchy were also regularly played out in the Slovak press. The cause of a Slovak congregation in New York City, which formed a breakaway church in protest at the instatement of a German-speaking priest, was taken up by one of the city's Slovak-language newspapers *Slovák v Amerike* (The Slovak in America) as well as ten Slovak political organisations and fraternal societies.⁴ It is worth bearing in mind that religious issues played a significant role in the everyday life of ordinary Slovak-speaking migrants and formed a major aspect of the campaigns of fraternal organisations and the Slovak-language press in the United States. Yet as this study seeks to account for the specific development of Slovak political nationalism in the United States, rather than the experiences of the Slovak-American community as a whole, the development of these 'immigrant churches' will not be discussed.⁵ Instead, this chapter will focus on the other two estates of the Slovak American migrant colony -the fraternal organisation and the Slovak-language press - in order to identify how Slovak 'national consciousness' and ideas

³ J. G. Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Lutherans, 1880-1915*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987, p. 294-95.

⁴ 'Slovaks to Build a Church', *New York Times*, 23 Sep 1895, p. 3.

⁵ See Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community*; T. J. Shelley, *Slovaks on the Hudson, Most Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers and the Slovak Catholics of the Archdiocese of New York*, Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002.

of Slovak political nationalism were forged among Slovak-speaking migrants living in the United States.

The Slovak-language press in the United States was a key institution that generated a wider, Slovak ‘national consciousness’ within migrant communities. Yet the first Slovak-language newspaper was not created with that or any other political purpose in mind. The perceived need for a Slovak-language newsheet was first taken up by the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Pittsburgh, which sought to curb a torrent of inquiries for information that it was receiving from the rapidly increasing migrant population in the United States.⁶ The consulate therefore assisted in the publication of a weekly, Slovak-language ‘Bulletin’ in 1885 to inform Slovak migrants of major events in Hungary, to counter rumours that immigration was to be restricted by the United States’ government, and to provide a forum to allow Slovak migrants to contact and reunite with family members in the United States.⁷ The ‘Bulletin’ was launched in 1885 at a cost of ten cents per copy and was expanded after twenty issues into an eight-page newspaper.⁸ The content of this early newsheet was produced by Ján Slovenský and Július Wolf, two migrants who had left Upper Hungary for the state of Pennsylvania in 1879.⁹ Both Slovenský and Wolf were raised in the town of Krompachy/Korompa/Krompach¹⁰ in Spiš County to German-speaking families.¹¹ Slovenský, despite possessing a surname that literally translates as ‘Slovak’, had a German-speaking mother and spoke German from childhood; Wolf’s father

⁶ Balch Institute/HSP, ‘National Slovak Society, National Records, 1915-1974. Box 2, Jubilee Book, 50th Anniversary, 2/3’, ‘John Slovenský and the First Slovak Newspaper in America’, *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1940*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlač Narodných Novín, 1940, p. 157.

⁷ ‘John Slovenský’, p. 157; R. Korbaš, ‘Peter Víťazoslav Rovnianek’, in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 27, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2010, p. 115.

⁸ ‘John Slovenský’, p. 158; K. Čulen (trans. D. C. Necas), *History of Slovaks in America*, St. Paul, MN: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007, p. 161.

⁹ ‘John Slovenský’, p. 157. Korbaš, ‘Peter Víťazoslav Rovnianek’, p. 114.

¹⁰ The name of the town in Slovak, Magyar and German languages respectively.

¹¹ ‘John Slovenský’, p. 157.

was a German elder of the town council and its Lutheran church.¹² The everyday language used by Slovenský and Wolf however was likely a combination of Slovak and German phrases, which formed an idiom known as ‘Hutorok’ and was commonly used in the mixed German and Slovak-speaking county of Spiš.¹³ Both Slovenský and Wolf were sent to the Slovak-language high school or *gymnazium* at Klaštor nad Znievom, which was meant to prepare the young men for a teaching career in Upper Hungary.¹⁴ The Slovak-language *gymnazium* at Klaštor was a prolific contributor of intellectual leaders to the Slovak national movement prior to being closed by the Hungarian government in 1874 to further its ‘Magyarisation’ of public education.¹⁵ As the historian Konštantín Čulen has put it, Klaštor ‘made Slovaks of these two German boys’ before they departed for the United States.¹⁶ Wolf and Slovenský initially worked as labourers upon their arrival in McKeesport, near Pittsburgh, in 1879, but their proficiency in the Slovak language was soon relied on by the Austro-Hungarian consulate in order to respond to inquiries from the growing migrant community.¹⁷

The early migrant press developed in the United States as a modestly successful commercial venture, that provided a source of valuable information to itinerant, Slovak-speaking migrants. In October 1886, Jan Slovenský discontinued the consulate’s ‘Bulletin’ and began publishing an independent newspaper, titled *Amerikánszko-Szlovenské Noviny* (American-Slovak News).¹⁸ Within two years, it had an estimated six thousand subscribers,

¹² K. Čulen, *J. Slovenský: Životopis Zakladateľa Prvých Slovenských Novín v Amerike*, Winnipeg: Kanadský Slovák, 1954, p. 12-15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14-15.

¹⁴ ‘John Slovenský’, p. 157; Korbaš, ‘Peter Vítázoslav Rovnianek’, p. 114.

¹⁵ O. V. Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938: Education and the Making of a Nation*, Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1985, p. 30.

¹⁶ Čulen, *J. Slovenský*, p. 18.

¹⁷ ‘John Slovenský’, p. 157; Korbaš, ‘Peter Vítázoslav Rovnianek’, p. 114.

¹⁸ J. Bartl et. al., (trans. D. P. Daniel), *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon*. Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2002, p. 111; Korbaš, ‘Peter Vítázoslav Rovnianek’, p. 115.

establishing the commercial market for a Slovak-language press.¹⁹ In subsequent decades, the newspaper created by Slovenský developed a weekly circulation figure of over thirty thousand: making it the most widely-read, Slovak-language newspaper in the world before the First World War.²⁰ Slovak-language newspapers as well as the *kalendár*, a news and general interest almanac, flourished in the New World to a far greater extent than in the Kingdom of Hungary.²¹ Six daily Slovak-language newspapers were in publication in the United States in 1914; in contrast, only one daily newspaper, published in Budapest, circulated in Upper Hungary.²² The Slovak National Party's weekly newspaper, titled *Národné Noviny* (National News), continued publication after the 1880s only with a Russian subsidy.²³ Historians such as Owen Johnson have judged that the consumption of Slovak-language printed material gradually increased in Upper Hungary before 1914; but any such increase was dwarfed by the number of titles, as well as the circulation figures, of Slovak newspapers in the United States.²⁴ The estimated circulation of the weekly Slovak-language press in Hungary was 48,300 in 1910, in contrast to 112,500 among the weekly Slovak press in the United States.²⁵ The phenomenon of a widely consumed Slovak-American press was not lost on contemporaries. In a letter written to Pavol Blaho, a Slovak nationalist politician holding a seat in the Hungarian Parliament, a Slovak pastor in the United States commented that 'At the moment we have here a full journalistic revolution [...] Slovaks mind the newspapers and abuse each other [in them] like children [...] We

¹⁹ 'John Slovenský', p. 159.

²⁰ K. Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy v Amerike*, Cleveland, OH: First Catholic Slovak Union, 1970, p. 19.

²¹ M. M. Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870-1918', (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1974), f. 240.

²² Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 61.

²³ E. Mannová, (ed.), *A Concise History of Slovakia*. Bratislava: VEDA, 2000, p. 225.

²⁴ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 16; Mannová, *Slovakia*, p. 226.

²⁵ M. M. Stolárik, 'The Role of the American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914-1918', (University of Ottawa, MA Thesis, 1968), f. 17.

can do this after all, when we are in a land of freedom, and it is pretty splendid for newspapers'.²⁶

The guaranteed freedom of the press in the United States was one of multiple factors contributing to the success of Slovak-language newspapers. Slovak American fraternal organisations also made a substantial contribution by directly publishing their own press organs. The First Catholic Slovak Union (hereafter Catholic Union) published its official organ, *Jednota* (The Union), in 1891; the National Slovak Society first used Slovenský's newspaper, before establishing its own organ, *Národné Noviny* (National News), in 1910.²⁷ The condensed, urban nature of Slovak settlement in the United States must also be viewed as a crucial factor. Cities like Pittsburgh and Cleveland and their surroundings held a concentrated base of readership, making the publication of a Slovak press there financially sustainable, whereas a disparate, rural market could not support a minority-language press. The first Slovak-language newspaper was originally published in Pittsburgh, before relocating to the nearby city of Connellsville, Pennsylvania; but as the translated title of 'American-Slovak News' indicates, this newspaper was not intended to be restricted to a purely regional market.²⁸ As the Slovak-language press became established in different centres of publication, including New York, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago, each major title sought its readership from Slovak-speaking migrants living throughout the United States.²⁹ This 'nationwide' coverage was one of the chief selling points of the Slovak-language newspaper to an ordinary migrant worker. Slovak-speaking migrants often did not remain in a single town or city after arriving in the United States,

²⁶ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 50, inv. č. 1678, poč. 44, Slavo Moravek to Pavol Blaho, Perryopolis, PA, 28 Nov. 1910, f. 1.

²⁷ Z. Pavelcová, 'V Spomienkach na Život a Dielo Ignáca Gessaya (1874-1928)', in Z. Pavelcová (ed.), *Slováci v Zahraníčí*, Vol. 31, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2015, p. 42.

²⁸ Bartl, *Slovak History*, p. 111.

²⁹ R. M. Zecker, "'All Our Own Kind Here": The Creation of a Slovak-American Community in Philadelphia, 1890-1945', (University of Pennsylvania, PhD thesis, 1998), f. 370.

but rather moved across the United States in search of better jobs, new opportunities or to reunite with their kin. In Juraj Matey's case, set out in the previous chapter, this process took place nine different times in just four years.³⁰ A nationwide, Slovak-language press therefore served an important practical function for migrants in the United States, by reporting on the social conditions and job prospects that they would find upon arriving in a new settlement. These newspapers for example provided regular updates on industrial accidents, disputes and strikes that affected the coal mines that employed many Slovak-speaking workers in the United States.³¹ One of the most significant social causes was the 'Lattimer Massacre' of October 1896, in which nineteen striking, unarmed workers were killed in clashes with the local police at the Lattimer coal mine in Pennsylvania: among the dead were Slovaks, whose cause was taken up by the Slovak-language press, which agitated for the conviction of the local sheriff and officers to no avail.³² Robert Zecker's local study has also described how the nationwide fraternal society newspapers served as 'bulletin boards giving Philadelphia a glimpse of a wider community; a turn of the page provided the gamut of Slovak life across America'.³³ A nationwide press may have offered the potential for a shared ethnically-Slovak consciousness to develop among migrants living in the United States in later decades; but in the 1880s commercial motives underpinned the emergence of the independent, Slovak-language newspaper.

The politically significant form that the Slovak-language press ended up taking in the United States owed little to the underlying demand of migrants for homeland news, but stemmed from the consciously nationalist objectives of the Slovak colony's largely self-

³⁰ AMS, Fond KSZ, č. šk 10, inv. č. 102, porad. č. 349, 'Juraj Matey: životopis a obálka', f. 1-12.

³¹ *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* (Connellsville, PA), 30 June 1896, p. 1; *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 22 Oct. 1902, p. 1.

³² Balch Institute/HSP, 'Jednota (Katolícky Kalendár, 1898-1919, incomp.)', Box 1 of 1, *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1898*, Cleveland, OH: Tlač Jednoty, 1898, p. 41-42; Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 122-123, p. 129-130.

³³ Zecker, "All Our Own Kind Here", f. 372.

selected leadership. Their efforts extended beyond merely promoting newspaper readership among Slovak-speaking migrants - which was a substantial challenge for the owners and editors of the Slovak American press - but also determined the written language in which the Slovak press communicated. This process can be directly observed in the history of the first Slovak newspaper in the United States. Ján Slovenský's *Amerikánszko-Szlovenszké Noviny* aimed to communicate to the bulk of Slovak migrants who had arrived in the United States from the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary. The newspaper was therefore printed in the 'Šariš' dialect of that region, whose vocabulary was more familiar to its readership than the standardised, Slovak language, whose origins lay in the central counties of Upper Hungary.³⁴ Slovenský and Július Wolf, who continued to work on the publication, also used a Magyar orthography to present the Šariš dialect in a printed form.³⁵ This was reflected by the initial title of the newspaper, which used the digraph 'sz' (as also used in the Magyar written language) to spell the words *Amerikánszko* and *Szlovenszké* rather than the letter 's', which was used in the literary Slovak language (*Amerikánsko; Slovenské*). The lack of influence that Slovak nationalists in the 'old country' had over Slovak-speaking migrants therefore extended to the migrants' use of regional dialects as the basis of their early press, as opposed to the 'national' Slovak literary language. The decision to publish in an eastern regional dialect was justified by Ján Slovenský in a letter to his former newspaper in 1897, in which he recalled that:

³⁴ Bartl, *Slovak History*, p. 111.

³⁵ Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 141.

Of every thousand letters that we received from our countrymen [at the Austro-Hungarian consulate], maybe one was written with accents [used in literary Slovak] and the other 999 were written in the Šariš dialect (*šarištine*). It followed that any newspaper published in literary Slovak could hardly prevail (*by sotva ostáli*). The plan of the founders was to introduce literary Slovak gradually and step by step - which took place in spite of protests from all sides that the public were not in a condition to understand the new script.³⁶

His successor as newspaper editor, Peter Rovnianek, who was an eyewitness to the newspaper's management from the late 1880s, provided in his memoirs a competing explanation for the use of the eastern dialect in its publication, declaring that:

Only from sheer illiteracy did Jánko Slovenský print the 'Bulletin' and *Amerikánszko-Szlovenszké Novini* [sic] in this way. If Jánko Slovenský had mastered the literary Slovak language then I have no doubts that he would have published in it, but he never acquired the correct Slovak grammar. [His counterpart] Wolf was more adept in Slovak [...] but he did not have the decisive word and in the editorship of the newspaper only followed Slovenský's steps. When they had already begun using the dialect form it was justified as a matter of commercial prudence, but this argument lagged behind [events] enormously.³⁷

Rovnianek's account has the distinct air of hindsight bias. Writing in 1924, he was able to take for granted the emergence of literary Slovak as a commercially viable and dominant print language of the Slovak American community. Indeed, it was Rovnianek himself who played a major role in ensuring this outcome as a leading newspaper editor and publisher from 1889. His claim that Slovenský's relatively poor grasp of literary Slovak determined the newspaper's print form might well be true, but it cannot account for the independent decisions to publish in the eastern dialect that were taken by other editors of early Slovak American newspapers. Ján Slovenský's decision to use the Šariš dialect was, for example, followed by Anton Ambrose, who began publishing his *Slovák v Amerike* newspaper in

³⁶ J. Slovenský, Letter to Editor, *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 13 May 1897, republished in P. V. Rovnianek, *Zápisky zažíva pochovaného*, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2004 [1st Ed. 1924], p. 71.

³⁷ Rovnianek, *Zápisky zažíva pochovaného*, p. 67.

Plymouth, Pennsylvania in 1889.³⁸ Ambrose became a close business partner of Rovnianek from the 1890s, a prominent Slovak nationalist agitator and eventually served as chairman of the National Slovak Society; but his early publication still used the dialect familiar to the bulk of migrants, rather than a literary Slovak language that they did not fully understand. The first newspaper to publish in the literary Slovak language, entitled *Nová vlast'* (The New Homeland) was produced in Streator, Illinois in 1888, but only lasted a few months before ceasing publication.³⁹ In short, early Slovak American publishers like Slovenský and Ambrose produced their newspapers in a dialect that was accessible to the bulk of the migrants who had come from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary. Slovenský's goal was after all to produce - in a commercially successful form - an informative periodical that would cater for Slovak migrant community along similar lines to the Austro-Hungarian consulate's original 'Bulletin'.⁴⁰ In the late 1880s it was not at all clear whether the literary, Slovak language, codified by a small group of Slovak nationalist leaders in Upper Hungary, or the dialect form that was familiar to most migrants to the United States, would become the dominant print language of the Slovak American colony. While the former represented a form of nationalistic politics that had some partisan followers in Slovak American life, precedent, familiarity and consequently commercial pressures made the Šariš dialect a viable alternative.

The Slovak-language press in the United States was transformed into a polemical and nationalistic form of media through the intervention of 'nationally conscious' publishers and organisational leaders within the migrant community. The fate of the first migrant newspaper - owing in part to its dominant circulation figures - set the wider pattern that the bulk of the migrant press followed during the 1890s. The conscious intervention to

³⁸ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 162.

³⁹ *Idem*.

⁴⁰ *Idem*; Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 141.

insert what Čulen described as ‘the spirit of the national movement’ into the migrant press was undertaken by Peter Rovnianek, Slovenský’s immediate successor as publisher and editor of *Amerikánszko-Szlovenszké Noviny* from 1889.⁴¹ Rovnianek was born in the village of Dolný Hričov in Trenčín County, Upper Hungary in 1867.⁴² His father Štefan was described as a ‘nationally conscious’ Slovak, who was a regular subscriber to the Slovak nationalist newspaper *Národné Noviny* as well as other Slovak-language publications in Upper Hungary.⁴³ Peter Rovnianek undertook a high school education at a gymnasium in the nearby town of Žilina/Zsolna, then Jászberény in central Hungary and finally at Nitra/Nyitra in Upper Hungary.⁴⁴ Rovnianek has already been noted in this work for being one of the few Slovak migrants of the period to have possessed a demonstrable political reason for leaving Upper Hungary, being expelled as a Slovak nationalist from his Catholic theological studies in May 1887.⁴⁵ Following this incident, Rovnianek secured an offer to complete his seminary training in the United States, where he arrived in 1888 and completed his theological studies in Cleveland in the spring of 1889.⁴⁶ Rovnianek was by this time more interested in the emerging Slovak-language journalism of the United States than seeking consecration as a priest, contributing articles regularly to both *Amerikánszko-Szlovenszké Noviny* and *Nová Vlast*.⁴⁷ His rise to prominence within Slovak American journalism at this time can be partly accounted for by his relatively high level of formal education compared to most Slovak-speaking migrants. A later biography noted, for example, that ‘not many Slovaks could write their language correctly in those days’ and so his articles in the literary Slovak form were gladly published, even by *Amerikánszko-*

⁴¹ Korbaš, ‘Peter Vítázoslav Rovnianek’, p. 115.

⁴² Rovnianek, *Zápisky zažíva pochovaného*, p. 6-7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7, p. 9, p. 14; Korbaš, ‘Peter Vítázoslav Rovnianek’, p. 114.

⁴⁵ Rovnianek, *Zápisky zažíva pochovaného*, p. 21; *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 68;

⁴⁶ Rovnianek, *Zápisky zažíva pochovaného*, p. 22, p. 42-45.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48; Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 162.

Szlovenszké Noviny, which nevertheless continued to print its own material in the Šariš dialect.⁴⁸ When the newsroom that published *Amerikánszko-Szlovenszké Noviny* burnt down in a freak accident in May 1889, Rovnianek was encouraged to come to Pittsburgh, where he funded the newspaper's publication once more as co-editor with Slovenský.⁴⁹ Slovenský stood down from his position later that year, confirming Rovnianek's editorial hold on the newspaper. He abandoned its use of the Magyar orthography upon its republication and from 1891 the newspaper permanently adopted the literary form of the Slovak language in place of the Šariš dialect form.⁵⁰ Under Rovnianek's sway, *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, as the newspaper's title now appeared in the standardised, Slovak form, became a chief agitator for the nationalist cause. A typical Rovnianek editorial in the newspaper in August 1895, for example, called for other Slovak American newspapers to stand up for Slovak national rights in Hungary, rhetorically asking them to declare 'that we are for the Slovak nation; that we are for its sacred rights; that we are all nationalists'.⁵¹ His contribution to the formation of an antagonistic and nationalist Slovak American press was not lost on the Hungarian government, who soon labelled Rovnianek 'a pernicious and dangerous pan-Slav agitator' in the United States.⁵²

Rovnianek established two key editorial principles that defined the Slovak press in the United States well into the twentieth century. Firstly, the Slovak American press took on an agitational role within the Slovak community in the United States and the Slovak national movement. Rovnianek's nationalist editorial stance in *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, which kept the expelled theological student under continued surveillance in the United States by the Hungarian authorities, can be contrasted with the politically neutral,

⁴⁸ *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 68.

⁴⁹ Korbaš, 'Peter Viťazoslav Rovnianek', p. 115.

⁵⁰ 'John Slovenský', p. 159; Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 143.

⁵¹ *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 17 Aug. 1895, p. 4.

⁵² Quoted in Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 142.

commercial and information-led articles that had characterised the first Slovak American newspaper under its previous editor Ján Slovenský. Following Rovnianek's lead, and often in direct response to his combative brand of journalism, the editors and chief writers of Slovak newspapers acted not only as journalists but also as political opinion-formers within the migrant community in the United States. His establishment of the standardised Slovak language as the chief print language of the Slovak American community was of even greater significance to the history of Slovak nationalism. In 1895, *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* had nearly 8000 subscribers to its newspaper; its nearest rival, *Slovák v Amerike* had around 800, while other Slovak newspapers had a few hundred each.⁵³ The conversion of by far the most widely circulated migrant newspaper to the literary Slovak print form under Rovnianek's editorship was soon followed by the bulk of the Slovak press in the United States. Existing titles like *Slovák v Amerike* undertook a similar transition while *Jednota*, the official organ of the Catholic Union fraternal organisation, was published in literary Slovak from its first issue in 1891.⁵⁴

The use of eastern Slovak dialects in the press was not entirely abandoned, but the practice became increasingly associated with an array of 'Magyarone' publications that promoted loyalty to the Hungarian state and opposed the new current of Slovak nationalism in its American press. Such newspapers such as *Zásztava* ('The Banner'), published by Jozef Kossalko during 1889 and *Šľebodni Orel* ('The Free Eagle'), published by Ferenc Dénes from 1900 and subsidised by the Hungarian government, used the Šariš dialect to promote a distinct identity among migrants from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary.⁵⁵

⁵³ K. Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy v Amerike*, Cleveland, OH: First Slovak Catholic Union, 1970, p. 19.

⁵⁴ Balch Institute/HSP, 'Jednota (Katolícky Kalendár, 1898-1919, incomp.)', Box 1 of 1, *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, Middletown, PA: Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota, 1916, p. 34.

⁵⁵ Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy*, p. 177-78; Korbaš, 'Peter Víťazoslav Rovnianek', p. 117; B. Vassady, 'Mixed Ethnic Identities Among Immigrant Clergy from Multiethnic Hungary: The Slovak-Magyar

Editors like Kossalko, a Catholic priest of a migrant parish, argued that migrants from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary were in fact ‘Slovjaks’ - a distinct, literary nation from the Slovaks of the western counties of Upper Hungary - and sought to cultivate pro-Hungarian political loyalties among them.⁵⁶ By 1900, the form of print language used by the Slovak press in the United States largely reflected the nationalistic divide that had already been established in Upper Hungary. ‘Nationally conscious’ Slovak newspapers used the standardised, Slovak literary language alone; while the eastern Slovak dialects were found chiefly in ‘Magyarone’ publications, often with the financial support of the Hungarian government. The attachment of Slovak nationalists to their own literary language helped to establish this division, that was largely artificial to many of their claimed countrymen from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary. It is entirely plausible that Slovak migrants could have published chiefly in their own, dialect forms in the United States rather than adopting an unfamiliar form of written language to do so. The conscious intervention of Rovnianek and subsequent Slovak newspaper editors worked against this possibility though. In the apt description of the historian Marián Stolárik, Rovnianek used his editorship of the largest Slovak American newspaper to ‘convert eastern Slovaks to nationalism’.⁵⁷ Rovnianek consciously opposed publication in the eastern Slovak dialects as a threat to what he perceived as Slovak national unity, that was expressed through a shared literary language.⁵⁸ Rovnianek imported textbooks and literary works from the Slovak national publishers in the town of Martin in order to further knowledge of the literary Slovak language within the Slovak American community, while other leaders of the Slovak national movement in the United States such as the Catholic priest Štefan

Case, 1895-1903’, in P. Kivisto (ed.), *The Ethnic Enigma: The Salience of Ethnicity for European-Origin Groups*, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1989, p. 56-59.

⁵⁶ Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy*, p. 60-61, p. 180; Vassady, ‘Mixed Ethnic Identities’, p. 58-59.

⁵⁷ Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 141.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 143.

Furdek published their own Slovak grammars to educate a second generation of Slovak American youth in the national, literary language.⁵⁹ The Slovak American press was consciously built as an institution that could effectively voice Slovak nationalist views by Rovnianek and a subsequent group of Slovak nationalist leaders, who sought to promote ‘national consciousness’ among the mass of Slovak-speaking migrants in the United States through education in the literary Slovak language and by the agitation of confrontational and political Slovak newspapers.

Slovak fraternal organisations were by far the largest single institutions of the Slovak migrant community in the United States and acted as a major factor in the development of both Slovak ‘national consciousness’ and nationalist political agitation among Slovak-speaking migrants. The combined membership of Slovak fraternal organisations by 1918, including women’s and youth wings, has been estimated at some 200,000. Nearly one-third of all Slovaks living in the United States was a member of one of these institutions.⁶⁰ As historians such as Mária Stolarik have pointed out, fraternal societies were not an entirely novel product of Slovak migration to the United States, but were rather modelled upon societies that had formed in Hungary as a replacement for the system of craft guilds, which had existed in that country until their abolition in 1870.⁶¹ Yet while fraternal organisations may have been inspired by systems of economic support that had been developed in the ‘old country’, the phenomenal success of Slovak fraternal organisations in the United States lay within the nature of the domestic American economy and the pattern of Slovak-speaking migration. Slovak migrants clustered around the coal and iron industries, which offered a generally steady source of employment for unskilled

⁵⁹ Korbaš, ‘Peter Vítázoslav Rovnianek’, p. 117; Slovak Institute, ‘Personalities File, Štefan Furdek, 1855-1915’, M. J. Kopanic, ‘For God and the Nation: The Rev. Štefan Furdek, 1855-1915’, *Naše Rodina*, Vol. 21: 3 (Sep. 2009), p. 96.

⁶⁰ Stolarik, ‘Role of American Slovaks’, f. 23.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, f. 70-72; Stolarik, ‘Slovak Immigrants’, p. 57.

labour. High rates of Slovak migration to the major industrial towns and cities of the eastern United States made possible the establishment of distinct, Slovak enclaves within these settlements. Industrial accidents, as well as urban squalor, were therefore an occupational hazard for Slovak migrants who predominantly worked and lived in these industrial environments.⁶² The annual toll in lives and injuries from industrial accidents in Pittsburgh was not even officially recorded: though just two gas explosions in nearby coal mines killed 274 workers in December 1907.⁶³ Fraternal societies flourished in this context as a means of providing forms of basic welfare and insurance cover to Slovak-speaking migrants and their family members in the absence of legal protection. In the state of Pennsylvania, for example, workers were not legally entitled to compensation for industrial injuries until 1915.⁶⁴ One of the chief functions of fraternal societies was to provide its members with support in the event of sickness, with payments of up to five dollars weekly being granted to qualifying cases by the 1890s.⁶⁵ The fraternal organisations also offered one of the most important services within the Slovak community: the provision of life insurance that would be paid out in the event of a member's death, with a lesser sum paid on the death of their spouse.⁶⁶ Fraternal societies contributed towards funeral expenses to ensure that a branch member would not receive a pauper's burial, a concern that was relevant to many Slovak-speaking migrants of working age because of the regular hazards

⁶² F. E. Crowell, 'Three Studies in Housing and Responsibility: II - Painters' Row', in Kellogg (ed.) *Wage-Earning Pittsburgh*, p. 133-4. M. F. Byington, 'The Family in a Typical Mill Town', *The Publications of the American Economic Association* (1886-1911) (Baltimore, MD), 10: 1 (Apr 1909), p. 202.

⁶³ J. R. Commons and W. M. Leiserson, 'Wage-Earners of Pittsburgh', in Kellogg (ed.) *Wage-Earning Pittsburgh*, p. 175-6.

⁶⁴ J. H. Pankuch, 'Fifty Years of Progress', in *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 88.

⁶⁵ IHRCA, Box SLK-60, (Slovak) Periodicals, VI-ZA, *Stanovy Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch severených amerických, Opravené na v. konvencii dňa 27., 28., 29. a 31. mája a 1. júna 1893, v Pittsburgh, PA*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerikánsko-Slovenských Novín, 1895, p. 3, p. 7-8; Fond KSZ, č. šk. 7, inv. č. 77, por. č. 181, 'Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota, č. 55, Philadelphia, Krátka dejiny spolku', Philadelphia, PA, Dec. 1935, 1jd/3s, f. 1.

⁶⁶ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, p. 34; *Stanovy Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 7. p. 9.

that they faced in the workplace.⁶⁷ Fraternal organisations gained the status of mass membership organisations in the Slovak American community chiefly because of the financial security that they provided to migrants in a risky economic and occupational situation.

Fraternal organisations not only played a crucial role in supporting members of the Slovak migrant community, but also aimed to foster Slovak ‘national consciousness’.

While the development of fraternal organisations as a form of social support can be largely explained by the social and economic context of Slovak migrant life in the United States, and the growth of parallel movements among the urban working classes everywhere, the national dimension to these organisations was not at all inevitable. Fraternal societies became distinct, ethnically ‘Slovak’ organisations in the United States due to the influence of nationalist leaders within the Slovak American community. Small-scale fraternal societies in the United States among migrants from Upper Hungary were formed in the 1880s: the first such group was the *Persi Uherszko-Szlovenszky v Nyemoci Podporujúci Szpolec* (The First Slovak-Hungarian Sickness Support Society), which was established in 1883 to protect tradesmen from Spiš County who were living in New York.⁶⁸ Both the ‘Slovak-Hungarian’ description as well as its use of an eastern Slovak dialect in the title of the organisation point to the fact that this society was not created to be a significant Slovak nationalist institution, but rather a society founded to provide a system of financial support modelled on the craft tradesmen guilds of the ‘old country’.⁶⁹ Religion also formed a substantial basis for the establishment of early fraternal groups, as organisations were formed to assist the construction of new churches to serve the different faiths among the

⁶⁷ *Stanovy Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 7.

⁶⁸ *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 86; Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 71-72.

⁶⁹ *Idem*.

Slovak community.⁷⁰ The first recorded Slovak, religious fraternal society, called *Spolok Svätého Jána* (The Society of Saint John) was formed in Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1883.⁷¹ By 1890 there were an estimated fifty independent, locally-based fraternal societies serving the Slovak-speaking migrant community in North America.⁷² The majority of these organisations were formed on the basis of religious affiliation, with only a minority of early Slovak-speaking migrant organisations using nationality rather than religious denomination as the basis of their membership.⁷³ The historian Marián Stolárik has attributed the inspiration for the creation of these Slovak national societies to the already established, German and Irish national societies in the United States.⁷⁴ Ceremonial public funerals, in which fraternal members were buried with the attendance of their fellow branch members and lodge officials, as well as the proliferation of badges and flags that accompanied Slovak national fraternal societies from the 1880s likely held their roots in similar displays that were prominent within Irish American fraternal organisations prior to the arrival of Slovak-speaking migrants.⁷⁵ A fraction of early fraternal organisations formed by Slovak-speaking migrants took up the idea of Slovak nationality as their basis, by largely imitating the practices of established national migrant societies in the United States. The bulk of early fraternal societies formed by Slovak-speaking migrants were however organised according to religious denomination rather than a perceived common nationality.

The development of nationhood as the basis for the organisation of Slovak American fraternal societies stemmed from the input of leaders from journalistic and religious circles as the migrant colony grew in the late 1880s. A larger fraternal

⁷⁰ Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 75.

⁷¹ *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 86.

⁷² Stolárik, 'Slovak Immigrants', p. 57.

⁷³ Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 73.

⁷⁴ *Idem*.

⁷⁵ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 148.

organisation would be easier to support in practice, by pooling the financial resources of more Slovak-speaking migrants to distribute collective insurance and benefits. The creation of such an ‘all-Slovak’ fraternal organisation representing migrants from different counties of Upper Hungary was also desirable from a nationalist point of view. The historian Konštantín Čulen has identified Edo Schwartz-Markovic as being the first Slovak American leader to promote this idea of merging migrant fraternal organisations as editor of *Nová Vlast’* in 1888.⁷⁶ The idea was then taken up by Peter Rovnianek, both in his own articles submitted to *Nová Vlast’* and as editor of the newspaper *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* from 1889.⁷⁷ Rovnianek’s purpose in creating a unified fraternal society was not just practical but also political: the organisation would function as a provider of sickness and death support to its members as well as serving as a key institution to promote a sense of common, Slovak nationhood within the migrant colony. Čulen argues that Rovnianek’s specific goal as the creation of ‘an equivalent to *Matica Slovenská*’ in the United States (the *Matica Slovenská* was the chief Slovak cultural organisation in Upper Hungary, which had been closed down and had its property seized by the Hungarian government in 1875).⁷⁸ That Rovnianek played a major role in the eventual creation of such a body in 1893, unimaginatively titled *Matica Slovenská v Amerike* (‘The *Matica Slovenská* in the United States’) certainly points to his interest in creating such a cultural centre for Slovak life based in the United States.⁷⁹

Rovnianek was however unsuccessful in his aim of uniting the fifty local fraternal societies into a truly ‘nationwide’ organisation, both in terms of its geographical coverage across the United States and its appeal to all Slovak-speakers from Upper Hungary. His

⁷⁶ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 149.

⁷⁷ *Idem*.

⁷⁸ A. M., Maxwell, ‘Choosing Slovakia 1795-1914: Slavic Hungary, the Czech Language and Slovak Nationalism’, (University of Wisconsin-Madison, PhD Thesis, 2003), f. 69.

⁷⁹ Korbaš, ‘Peter Viťazoslav Rovnianek’, p. 118.

agitation for the merger of fraternal societies in *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* was criticised by opponents such as the Catholic priest Jozef Kossalko in his *Zásztava* ('The Banner') newspaper during 1889.⁸⁰ Kossalko argued that Rovnianek's vision of a nationality-based, non-denominational organisation was incompatible with the purpose of the Catholic fraternal societies that had already been established in the migrant colony.⁸¹ Kossalko clearly exploited in this bitter polemical exchange the conflicting views that were held by Slovak American leaders about the role of religion within fraternal organisations. Prominent members of the Slovak Catholic clergy in the United States, such as Štefan Furdek, were anxious to maintain the central importance of faith within any such nationwide fraternal organisation. Rovnianek's plan for a universal, all-Slovak fraternal organisation foundered on denominational divisions, as well as objections to any form of Slovak national organisation by Kossalko and other pro-Hungarian, Catholic priests in the United States. In its place, Slovak Catholic priests under Štefan Furdek and Kossalko's leadership formed a fraternal society to unite the existing Catholic organisations, on a basis distinct from Rovnianek's proposed national organisation. At a meeting chaired by Furdek in Cleveland in May 1889, representatives of Catholic societies established the basis for this organisation and in September 1890 their new fraternal society, commonly known as the 'Catholic Union' (*Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota*)⁸² held its first convention with representatives from eight previously existing Catholic fraternal societies.⁸³ The organisation's motto was established as 'for God and the nation' (*za Boha a národ*), which aptly described the nature of the Catholic Union as well as its priorities in Slovak American

⁸⁰ Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy*, p. 177.

⁸¹ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 150.

⁸² Though the fraternal organisation's full name on its creation - 'Catholic Union in the United States, under the protection of Holy Mary, patroness of the Hungarian land' (*Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota v Spojených Štátoch Amerických, pod ochranou Panny Márie, patrónky Uhorskej krajiny*) - points to the influence of priests loyal to the Hungarian state in its establishment. See Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 155.

⁸³ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, p. 34.

life.⁸⁴ While the organisation in time promoted the idea of Slovak nationhood among its membership, this goal was considered secondary to sustaining the Catholic faith among migrants living in the United States.⁸⁵ While the Slovak nationalist priest Furdek became president of the fraternal society, the religious basis of the organisation allowed pro-Hungarian or ‘Magyarone’ Catholic priests working in Slovak and mixed Slovak and Hungarian parishes such as Kossalko and Samuel Bella to hold a level of influence within the society.⁸⁶ Kossalko’s stint as an office-holder in the society proved to be short-lived, but the continued presence of ‘Magyarone’ Catholic priests in the organisation was one factor in the formation of a splinter organisation of Slovak Catholics in Pennsylvania in 1893.⁸⁷ Further religious fraternals serving the entire United States were formed following the lead of Furdek’s organisation: a major fraternal for Slovak Lutherans, the Slovak Evangelical Union (*Slovenská Evangelická Jednota*) was formed in 1893 and a similar organisation for Slovak Calvinists was formed in 1901.⁸⁸

Rovnianek pursued his goal of an all-Slovak organisation regardless of the establishment of these denominationally-defined fraternal societies. In February 1890, he convened a meeting of representatives of other Slovak societies in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, at which the ‘National Slovak Society (in the United States)’ (*Národný slovenský spolok v Spojených Štátoch Amerických*) was formed, with Rovnianek as its

⁸⁴ The slogan was later taken up by the clerical nationalist, Slovak People’s Party during the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, and consequently became associated with the fascist, Slovak state led by Jozef Tiso between 1939 and 1945. See J. R. Felak, *‘At the Price of the Republic’: Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party, 1929-1938*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993, p. 39; J. M. Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013, p. 71.

⁸⁵ Kopanic, ‘For God and the Nation’, p. 96.

⁸⁶ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 153; Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 77.

⁸⁷ Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 77-78.

⁸⁸ Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision*, p. 38.

president.⁸⁹ The National Slovak Society's charter established rates of sickness and death support for its membership, as had the various religious fraternal organisations, but also declared its aim to be the development of 'love for the nation, so that members will be faithful sons of the Slovak nation and good citizens of the United States'.⁹⁰ Membership of the society was open to all Christian denominations, providing that the applicant was considered to be morally upstanding.⁹¹ The National Slovak Society succeeded in attracting different denominational groups to its organisation, as well as prominent Freemasons like Anton Ambrose, who succeeded Rovnianek as the organisation's president in 1900.⁹² The creation of the National Slovak Society was a significant moment in the emergence of a trans-Atlantic Slovak national movement. Ján Pankuch, a Slovak publisher in the 1890s who became president of the National Slovak Society in 1937, declared the society's foundation to be 'the day, when our Slovak nation laid the foundations of a new life, new prospects and national consciousness [...] its main objective from the beginning was to awaken and to raise the spirit of our stricken nation'.⁹³ The National Slovak Society led Slovak American contributions to their homeland national movement during the 1890s and early 1900s, but the organisation did not become the largest fraternal society in the United States. According to the published membership figures of both organisations, the Catholic Union had more than 32,000 members in 1908; the National Slovak Society by comparison had 28,300 members in the previous year.⁹⁴ Both organisations had an exclusively male membership, but their leadership also promoted the development of counterpart

⁸⁹ The minutes of the meeting were published by the National Slovak Society to celebrate the organisation's fiftieth jubilee. *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 26-27.

⁹⁰ *Stanovy Národného Slovenského Spolku*, f. 3.

⁹¹ *Idem*.

⁹² Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 155.

⁹³ *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 25.

⁹⁴ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, p. 53; Balch Institute/HSP, 'National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)', Box 2, *Pamätník Národný Slovenský Spolok v Spojených štátoch amerických, Vydaný z Príležitosti 25-Ročného Jubileumu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1915*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Národných Novín, 1915, p. 74.

organisations in which Slovak women were offered fraternal benefits at a lower rate of contributions and benefits received than for men. A women's society called *Živena* (Giver of Life) was formed with Rovnianek's support in 1891, while in the same year Štefan Furdek established a direct sister organisation for women alongside the Catholic Union.⁹⁵

The growth of both Rovnianek and Furdek's national fraternal organisations was sufficient to make them the largest mass membership institutions within the Slovak American community. The goal of Slovak nationalists like Rovnianek to create a united Slovak fraternal society with both a social and a national purpose was only partially successful; while his National Slovak Society wielded considerable influence, it possessed a rival in the form of the Catholic Union. The denominational issue that prevented the creation of a single fraternal organisation encompassing all Slovak-speaking migrants proved to be a permanent divide within Slovak American life, although in practice the two fraternal organisations often contributed to joint projects such as church-building or nationalist campaigns. The creation of these mass membership organisations was sufficient for the historian Konštantín Čulen to define the period from 1890 as one in which Slovak American history was 'essentially the history of Slovak-American organisations'.⁹⁶ These fraternal organisations developed, at the best of times, a form of competitive rivalry with one another; when the interests of the two major Slovak fraternal organisations clashed however, the outcome was often a journalistic 'struggle' (*boj*), conducted between Slovak fraternal societies and stoked by the polemical Slovak press in the United States.

The internal structure of these national Slovak American fraternal societies played an important role in fostering Slovak 'national consciousness' among their membership.

The national Slovak American fraternal organisations evolved into a system of local

⁹⁵ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 11, inv. č. 103, porad. č. 373, 'Adresár odborov Živeny v USA', [Location unknown], 1933, 1jd/4s, f. 1; Kopanic, 'For God and the Nation', p. 96.

⁹⁶ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 156.

branches or society lodges - having been formed from several, already existing, local lodges, the new national executives from 1890 sanctioned the creation of new chapters in various migrant centres in the United States.⁹⁷ By 1910, the city of Pittsburgh and its surrounding industrial area for example had some twenty male fraternal and seven female lodges catering for its Slovak-speaking community.⁹⁸ This form of organisation allowed the bulk of migrants who came from the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary to maintain the forms of local and regional identity that had prevailed over any sense of Slovak nationhood in the 'old country'. Robert Zecker's study of the Slovak migrant community in Philadelphia found that branches of the major fraternal societies were formed and dominated by migrants from the same county of Upper Hungary. Slovak migrants from the county of Zemplín in Hungary often joined a branch where fellow Zemplín migrants already congregated; migrants from Spiš and other counties of Upper Hungary joined as well as founded different local branches that reflected their existing local and county ties.⁹⁹ In cities like Philadelphia this practice was facilitated by streetcar transportation, which Slovak-speaking migrants used to attend distant churches and fraternal branches in other parts of the city that were attended by migrants from their county or locality in the 'old country'.¹⁰⁰ As Zecker noted, it was 'Old World ties, not Philadelphia address' that played the decisive role in the membership of Slovak fraternal branches in the city.¹⁰¹ June Alexander's study of Slovak religious fraternal societies in Pittsburgh found a similar pattern and has argued that regional and county affiliations persisted within the fraternal societies of the city until 1914. This affiliation was further supported by high rates of inter-marriage of Slovak migrants, who had been born in the same county of Upper

⁹⁷ Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, p. 61-62.

⁹⁸ Alexander, 'The Immigrant Church and Community', f. 220.

⁹⁹ Zecker, "All Our Own Kind Here", f. 347.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 317.

¹⁰¹ *Idem.*

Hungary and often met at the balls, picnics and other social functions held by their local fraternal chapters in the city.¹⁰²

The organisation of Slovak fraternal societies throughout the United States also however allowed for an 'all-Slovak' solidarity and common nationhood to develop above the level of the individual branch membership. Officers within the Slovak national and Catholic fraternal societies regularly socialised at a countrywide level; the annual conventions of the National Slovak Society were held in various cities from Milwaukee and Chicago in the Midwest to Baltimore and New York on the eastern seaboard - representing the geographical scope of the Slovak-speaking colony.¹⁰³ Each local branch of the fraternal society was allowed to nominate representatives at its national convention, who voted on the policies of the organisation and its office holding leadership.¹⁰⁴ A typical National Slovak Society convention held in Pittsburgh on the Decoration (Memorial) Day holiday in May 1895 was accompanied by a public march of its uniformed membership, Slovak American musical bands from Cleveland and New York and a picnic for members of the organisation as well as for Slovak-speaking migrants living within the city.¹⁰⁵ Other social gatherings within fraternal organisations also took place on a regional basis; Zecker's study of Slovak fraternal societies in Philadelphia found that individual lodges participated in events held as far as 170 miles away in New Jersey or upstate Pennsylvania.¹⁰⁶ The nationwide scope of the largest Slovak American fraternals also held advantages for ordinary members in the case of itinerant migration. Members of a fraternal society who migrated to a different town within the United States could obtain transfer

¹⁰² Alexander, 'The Immigrant Church and Community', p. 204-205.

¹⁰³ Slovak Institute, 'Personalities File, P. V. Rovnianek, 1867-1933', 'Chronology of [National Slovak Society] Conventions', f. 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Stanovy Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 39-40.

¹⁰⁵ *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 7 May 1895, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Zecker, "All Our Own Kind Here", f. 369-370.

letters that secured their entry into a branch in their new location and carried their existing financial contributions.¹⁰⁷ Fraternal members could also apply for a loan from the local branch society to buy their travel tickets for the move and sometimes received farewell parties held by the former branch organisation.¹⁰⁸ The National Slovak Society even offered its members ten dollars' support in order to purchase travel tickets from the United States to Upper Hungary: a gesture that neatly coincided with Rovnianek's own side business as a seller of transatlantic steamship tickets.¹⁰⁹ Slovak migrants were therefore able to move between the major centres of Slovak migration in the United States without losing the benefits of their fraternal membership; while a sense of Slovak national fraternity was also demonstrated in a practical way through this network of local branch organisations.

Slovak fraternal societies and the press were the key institutions in which a sense of Slovak 'national consciousness' took root within the migrant colony. The historian Josef Barton in his local study of migrants living in Cleveland identified the first decade of the twentieth century as the period that marked 'the completion of the organisation of the Slovak Catholic community' in that city: a conclusion that this thesis supports more broadly across the United States.¹¹⁰ Major institutions in Slovak migrant life such as Slovak churches, mass-membership fraternal organisations and the Slovak-language press were from 1900 supplemented by Slovak-language parochial schools as well as competing Catholic and secular Slovak *Sokol* gymnastic organisations.¹¹¹ Leisure time within Slovak American communities was catered for by the regular organisation of dances and picnics by both men's and women's

¹⁰⁷ Zecker, "All Our Own Kind Here", f. 373.

¹⁰⁸ *Stanovy Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁹ Idem; Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization', f. 120.

¹¹⁰ Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, p. 131.

¹¹¹ Stolárik, 'The Role of the American Slovaks', f. 22-23.

branches of Slovak American fraternal organisations, as well as performances by Slovak-language theatre groups that toured major Slovak settlements across the country.¹¹² The largest Slovak organisations also formed youth branches of their organisations in order to serve an emerging second generation within the Slovak migrant community. The Catholic Union was the first to form its youth organisation in 1900, which possessed some 8600 members in 1912.¹¹³ This figure represented more than one-quarter of the organisation's adult membership and demonstrates how seriously the task of incorporating a new generation of Slovak-speaking, American-born youth into these organisations was taken by Slovak American leaders at the time.¹¹⁴

National celebrations were also developed by Slovak American organisations to both foster Slovak national consciousness and to raise awareness of the Slovaks as an ethnic community among the wider American public. From 1906, Štefan Furdek agitated for the establishment of a 'Slovak Day' in the United States on the Catholic feast-day of Saint Cyril and Methodius, Byzantine missionaries who had spread Christianity to Slavic groups in the ninth century and potent symbols of Slovak national identification.¹¹⁵ The 'Slovak Day' was typically held on the saints' feast day of 5 July: a date that allowed Slovak Americans to associate their own celebration of Slovak ethnicity with the Independence Day displays of American patriotism that took place the previous day in the calendar.¹¹⁶ The idea of a 'Slovak

¹¹² Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 353, p. 366-367.

¹¹³ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, p. 56.

¹¹⁴ *Idem*.

¹¹⁵ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 273-274.

¹¹⁶ Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, p. 385-386. The Saints' Day has been celebrated as a state holiday (on 5 July) in Slovakia since 1990. During the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, the Saints' Day was incorporated within the state holiday commemorating the religious dissident Ján Hus, which was established in 1925. This was despite the fact that the Saints' Day commemoration was originally moved to 5 July in the Bohemian Crown Lands as a counterweight to the Hus commemorations made

Day’ also demonstrated the extent to which nationalist ceremonies and cults were exchangeable among the different ethnic groups living in the United States. The cult of Saint Patrick’s Day celebrations, already being annually held by Irish organisations in the United States, inspired the idea of a ‘Slovak Day’ directly linked to a patron saint who had been adopted for nationalist purposes. Michal Bosák, a highly successful banker who acted as chief financial officer for the Catholic Union, justified the merits of the Slovak Day idea by pointing out the merits of the Irish American celebrations that he witnessed in the mining town of Scranton, Pennsylvania. In a letter published under *Jednota*’s editorial banner, he observed that Saint Patrick’s Day ‘celebrations here are patriotic. They reinforce their national feeling that ‘I am an Irishman and an Irishman I will remain...[and in this] they do much good for the Irish national cause’.¹¹⁷ Bosák declared that these public displays ‘filled me with admiration towards this Catholic nation, whose unselfish and enthusiastic national patriotism ought to serve as an example to Slovaks’.¹¹⁸ The role of Irish American organisations in contributing to their nationalist cause in Ireland was typically viewed by Slovak American leaders as ‘a comparison that Slovaks ought to make use of’ in creating their own transatlantic nationalist movement.¹¹⁹

by anticlerical Czech nationalists in the nineteenth century. See: C. J. Paces, ‘Religious Heroes for a Secular State: Commemorating Jan Hus and Saint Wenceslas in 1920s Czechoslovakia’, in M. Bucur and N. M. Wingfield (eds.), *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001, p. 216; M. Votruba, [Cyril and Methodius] ‘Holiday Date’, University of Pittsburgh, Slovak Studies Program, <http://www.pitt.edu/~votruba/qsonhist/cyrlmethodiusholidayhistory.html> (accessed 13 Sep. 2017).

¹¹⁷ *Jednota*, 27 Mar. 1912, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ *Idem*.

¹¹⁹ *Jednota*, 24 Oct. 1906, p. 4. See also an editorial comparison between the struggle for Gaelic language recognition taken up by Irish organisations and the campaign for Slovak language rights in Hungary, issued in *Jednota*, 10 May 1905, p. 4; an editorial supporting the trans-Atlantic campaign for Irish Home Rule as a model for achieving Slovak nationalist aims in Hungary, in *Jednota*, 22 Dec. 1909, p. 4. The apparent willingness of Irish Americans “to sacrifice millions [in terms of wealth] on the altar of the nation” was also used to condemn the lack of Slovak American contributions to the national cause as early as 1894 in Slovak American texts. See P. Čiernovodský, ‘My a druhonnárodnosti v Amerike’, Balch Institute/HSP, ‘National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac,

The creation of medals and flags for Slovak American organisations, as well as the spectacle of public funerals for members of Slovak fraternal organisations, attended by their organisation's officers and local branch members also stemmed, as Čulen has argued, from the existing practices of similar, Irish American organisations like the Ancient Order of Hibernians.¹²⁰ As June Alexander notes, the idea of a Slovak Day was taken up primarily by Slovak Catholic leaders before the First World War, with the aim of firmly linking their Catholic faith to the expression of Slovak ethnicity and patriotism within the wider, mixed faith Slovak community in the United States.¹²¹ While the goal of 'consecrating the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius as a Slovak National Day' was collectively backed by Slovak American organisations, the response from non-denominational, Slovak organisations to this cause was typically lukewarm.¹²² During and after the First World War, by contrast, Slovak Day celebrations played a prominent role in the public display of both Slovak ethnic identity as well as American patriotism in the United States.¹²³

The Slovak-language press also served as a basis of cooperation between Slovak fraternal groups as well as among individual migrants. The National Slovak Society used Rovnianek's *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* to promote its activity to an audience of fraternal members across the United States, while the Catholic Union established its own newspaper, *Jednota*, edited by its president Štefan Furdek from

1893-1905/6 (incomp.)', Box 1, *Národný Kalendár pre rímsko a grécko-katolíkov a evanjelikov na obyčajný rok 1894*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerikánsko Slovenských Novín, 1894, p. 176.

¹²⁰ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 148.

¹²¹ J. G. Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004, p. 94.

¹²² Fond KSZ, č. šk. 2, inv. č. 21, fond č. 48, 'Stanovy Slovenskej Lígy, utvorenej dňa 26 mája 1907 na Národnom Kongresse v Cleveland, Ohio, Opravené z nariadenie Kongressu odbývaného dňa 5. júla 1909 v Pittsburghu, PA', Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerického Slavonického Gazeta Publishing. Co., 1909, Ijd/16s, f. 4.

¹²³ Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism*, p. 94.

1891.¹²⁴ Slovak-language newspapers promoted the contribution of funds on a nationwide level for the building of individual Slovak churches as well as the establishment of ‘national’ halls and events held by local Slovak organisations.¹²⁵ In 1902, Rovnianek’s newspaper directly agitated for Slovak organisations in New York to establish Slovak national buildings, arguing that as the Czech community had done so, their failure to achieve the same outcome would demonstrate that the Czechs ‘have a greater appreciation of their national cause’ than Slovaks living in the city.¹²⁶ The local and county forms of association that retained meaning for many Slovak-speakers long after their arrival in the United States were not substituted, but rather an additional level of association was created by the activity of fraternal societies and the press. These institutions formed a nationwide network in terms of their geographic spread across the United States, as well as their integration of local branches of Slovak-speakers from different counties of Upper Hungary into national, Slovak organisations.

While Slovak-speaking migrants constantly interacted with fellow Slavs and others within the multi-ethnic urban environment of the United States, their participation in these self-identified Slovak institutions - from childhood to the grave in the case of the growing second generation - helped to form what Barton describes as ‘the norm of Slovak ethnicity’ among migrants living in the United States.¹²⁷ While the bulk of everyday activities in Slovak American organisations had little to do with the expression of political nationalism, the creation of this set of distinct, Slovak institutions in the United States developed a potential basis for Slovak

¹²⁴ *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 25; Kopanic, ‘For God and the Nation’, p. 96.

¹²⁵ Alexander, ‘The Immigrant Church and Community’, f. 425.

¹²⁶ *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 21 Oct 1902, p. 4.

¹²⁷ Barton, *Peasants and Strangers*, p. 151.

nationalist agitation within these organisations. It produced a viable, 'national' community in which the minority of politically-engaged Slovak migrants could attain leadership roles and upheld their own efforts as a model for the development of Slovak 'national consciousness' within Upper Hungary. In all areas except perhaps the churches - where finding Slovak-speaking priests for parishes proved a limiting factor - Slovak migrants established a broader and more influential set of ethnically-defined, Slovak institutions than existed among Slovak-speakers in the 'old country'. Nationalist activism in the Slovak American community was therefore not the inevitable outcome of the mass migration of Slovak-speakers to the United States that developed from the 1870s. Slovak-speaking migrants predominantly came from the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary, where the influence of the Slovak nationalist leadership had been minimal. Regional identities formed around counties of origin as well as local parishes in Hungary were not only taken across the Atlantic, but most often acted as the basis by which migrants formed new fraternal society branches and church parishes in the United States.

The most significant obstacle to Slovak nationalist agitation in the migrant colony stemmed from the question of language use. The idea of a standardised, Slovak literary language that was distinct from literary Czech or Polish formed the key basis for the Slovak national movement of the mid nineteenth century in Upper Hungary. Yet among the Slovak migrant colony in the United States, the local dialect forms used by migrants from counties like Spiš and Šariš in Upper Hungary not only survived as a form of everyday communication but directly competed with standardised form of Slovak as the chief print language of the Slovak American press and its earliest fraternal organisations. The historian Mark Stolárik asserted that the

Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary ‘took heart’ from the news that Slovaks were publishing a newspaper in Pittsburgh: yet this first Slovak American newspaper was published in one of the ‘eastern Slovak’ dialects that these Slovak nationalists were in fact struggling to replace with their ‘national’ literary Slovak language in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary.¹²⁸ Eric Hobsbawm accounted for the Slovak American community serving as ‘the mass basis of an organized Slovak nationalism’ in the early twentieth century in a similar manner that took the form of language for granted within the migrant colony. Hobsbawm argued that there was a collective need among migrants to offer mutual aid in a new land where ‘Slovak priests had to talk Slovak to them’ alongside other leaders of the Slovak American community.¹²⁹ Yet as this chapter has shown, a substantial section of the emerging leadership of the migrant community in the United States, the most prominent of which being the Catholic priest Jozef Kossalko, instead promoted the idea that Slovak migrants from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary formed a distinct national group. To this end, they published the dialects of these counties as an alternative, print language to standardised Slovak in the United States and promoted loyalty to the Hungarian state with that government’s direct support for their activity.

Such historical assessments have largely taken it for granted that Slovak nationalist agitation about a relatively obscure literary language would have prevailed over the use of local dialect forms within the Slovak migrant community, but in the 1880s there were few compelling reasons to expect that outcome. The weight of migration from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary had led early publishers like Ján Slovenský to use their dialect rather than standard written Slovak

¹²⁸ Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, p. 134.

¹²⁹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987, p. 154.

in the first Slovak American commercial newspaper. But for a fateful fire that burnt down his newsroom in 1889 and led him to call for outside help to restore his operations, Slovenský could well have established the ‘Šariš’ dialect of *Amerikánszko-Szlovenské Noviny* as the chief print language among the Slovak American migrant community. The emergence of a rift between the language used by the Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary and the migrant colony in the United States would have greatly undermined the prospects of a transatlantic political movement being formed in the following decades. The deliberate intervention of some nationalistically-minded Slovak migrants at a crucial time in the formation of the Slovak American community prevented this outcome from taking place. Peter Rovnianek’s assumption of his role as editor of by far the largest Slovak American newspaper brought about a clearly discernible shift: within months, the newspaper was renamed and printed in the literary Slovak form, and its content shifted from an essentially informative ‘bulletin’ of events towards a Slovak nationalist editorial agenda. Over subsequent years, the likes of Rovnianek, Štefan Furdek and other leading Slovak nationalist editors in the United States established literary Slovak as the chief, print language within the migrant colony and agitated in their flourishing press organs for the forging of Slovak ‘national consciousness’ among their readership. The forms of transatlantic nationalist agitation that took place among Slovaks from the 1890s were made by possible by the deliberate intervention of nationalist leaders rather than being the logical outcome of the mass migration from Upper Hungary to the United States.

A similar phase of consciously nationalist institution-building accounted for the creation of the major Slovak American fraternal organisations, although its results were not

as straightforward as in the case of the Slovak American press. The dominant role of industrial labour in the working life of Slovak-speaking migrants made it probable that they would seek protection within private fraternal organisations, given that these workers faced major occupational hazards for which existing American laws provided little protection. The early fraternal societies formed by migrants were generally not formed on the basis of Slovak nationhood, but chiefly by their religious denomination as well as a handful of tradesmen's societies. The nature of the fraternal organisation's business model - providing insurance in case of sickness, death or industrial injuries - provided a commercial incentive for these early societies to merge, as larger institutions could build more capital to distribute to its membership and to withstand monthly changes to the society's contributions and expenses. The formation of both a consciously nationalistic fraternal society under Rovnianek's leadership and a Catholic counterpart under Štefan Furdek was the outcome of the Catholic clergy's concern to retain the Catholic faith held by the bulk of Slovak-speaking migrants. At the same time, however, the creation of a distinct Catholic fraternal organisation was supported by the politically pro-Hungarian or 'Magyarone' element of the Catholic clergy in the United States. The structure of these competing devotional and national fraternal societies incorporated local lodges that had developed along existing forms of regional and local identity taken by migrants from Upper Hungary, while establishing a series of social events and fraternal conventions at the national level that promoted a greater sense of collective 'Slovakness'. In this way, the national fraternal organisations created a 'Slovak' national community in the United States that existed alongside, rather than replaced, the regional forms of association that migrants took with them from Upper Hungary.

The Slovak American press and fraternal organisations were key institutions that helped to make ‘nationally conscious’ Slovaks from the hundreds of thousands of transatlantic migrants from Upper Hungary. This development of an overarching sense of ethnic ‘Slovakness’ should be understood as both a gradual and only a partially complete process. Not every migrant from Upper Hungary read a Slovak-language newspaper in the United States and became a Slovak nationalist: indeed, many did not read the press at all. The Slovak American press did, however, circulate to over one hundred thousand readers per week, while Slovak fraternal organisations had over two hundred thousand members prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Through the influence of these institutions the idea of Slovak nationhood was taken up by a growing fraction of the migrant colony in the United States. The development of ‘national consciousness’ within the Slovak American community was the key feature that allowed its leaders to play a central role in shaping the political goals and campaign tactics of the Slovak national movement. The establishment of the Slovak-language press and national Slovak American fraternal organisations in 1890 thus turns the history of Slovak nationalism into the history of a transatlantic political movement.

Chapter 4: The Creation of a Transatlantic Slovak National Movement, 1890-1907

The 1890s was the formative decade of transatlantic Slovak nationalism. In Upper Hungary, the Slovak National Party was pushed into a new policy of parliamentary and popular agitation by external challenges as well as internal criticism by nationalist intellectuals. Meanwhile, as seen in Chapter 3 of the present study, the Slovak migrant press and organisations in the United States were consolidated into institutions that promoted ideas of Slovak nationhood among a migrant community in which local and regional identities had previously held sway. By the end of the 1890s these Slovak American institutions surpassed Slovak national organisations in the ‘old country’ in terms of their mass appeal and financial resources. These two centres of Slovak nationalist activism could not be readily separated by either the Atlantic Ocean or by Hungarian state censors, but coordinated their activities in the pursuit of Slovak national rights in Hungary. By the time that the Slovak National Party re-entered active parliamentary politics in 1900, the pursuit of Slovak nationalism was an inherently transatlantic affair, and remained so until the outbreak of the First World War. Slovak American fraternal organisations played a key role in sustaining Slovak writers, intellectuals and political activists in Upper Hungary. The Slovak-language press became a transatlantic product, as Slovak journalists both in Europe and the United States exchanged articles and supported one another financially. The development of Slovak nationalist agitation before the First World War therefore cannot be understood without considering the transatlantic framework of support in terms of funding and political strategy offered by Slovak American migrants to the existing nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary.

From Passive to Active Electoral Politics: The Slovak National Movement in Hungary, 1880-1900

Prior to investigating how transatlantic connections were forged between these two centres of Slovak national life, it is first necessary to understand the state of Slovak nationalism in Upper Hungary. During this period, the strategy of electoral passivism adopted by the Slovak National Party - the chief political organisation of the Slovak national movement - was challenged and eventually rendered obsolete. This outcome was driven by the combination of populist electoral agitation by rival all-Hungarian political parties within Upper Hungary, and by dissenting voices within the Slovak nationalist intelligentsia who argued for a new course. From the 1890s, the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary was in the process of what the historian Elena Mannová has described as the 'transition towards modern, mass politics'.¹ This key development occurred in the 'old country' at just about the same time that national, Slovak fraternal organisations were being formed and consolidated in the United States, and the Slovak American press was taking shape under Peter Rovnianek's lead as a source of Slovak nationalist agitation. The shifting base of Slovak nationalist leadership and political ideology in Upper Hungary must therefore be set out first in this chapter, to understand the terms by which Slovak American organisations took up the cause of Slovak nationalism before the First World War.

The Slovak national movement of the late nineteenth century was led in principle by the activity of the Slovak National Party (*Slovenská Národná Strana*) - hereafter referred to as the 'SNP'. This political organisation was based in the small

¹ E. Mannová, (ed.), *A Concise History of Slovakia*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000, p. 195.

town of Martin in Turiec county, Upper Hungary. The town had been the site of the public assembly at which the major, Slovak nationalist manifesto, the ‘Memorandum of the Slovak Nation’ had been drafted in 1861.² It was also the site of the *Maticá Slovenská* cultural institute, established by Slovak nationalist intellectuals in 1863, in imitation of other Slav nationalist organisations in the Habsburg Empire.³ The county of Turiec as well as neighbouring Liptov county were both centrally located in Upper Hungary and formed the main area of the SNP’s political activity. In the Hungarian parliamentary election of 1901, for example, the party contested two seats in Turiec and Liptov county as opposed to single seats in other counties of Upper Hungary. The SNP contested no seats at all in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary where transatlantic migration was occurring at its highest rate.⁴ Slovak nationalist leaders did not come from the nobility of Upper Hungary - the bulk of whom considered themselves to be leading members of the Magyar aristocracy and nation - but rather from middle-class professionals.⁵ Viliam Pauliny-Tóth, Pavol Mudroň and Matúš Dula, the three chairmen of the SNP before 1918, were all practising lawyers. This profession proved useful for political leadership among Slovak nationalists, given the frequent legal battles between them and the Hungarian state, following the Austro-Hungarian ‘Compromise’ of 1867.⁶ Another prominent source of Slovak nationalists

² ‘Memorandum národa slovenského k vysokému snemu krajiny uhorskej [...]’, [6/7 June 1861] in ‘Dr. Vacovský’ [Milan Ivanka], *Slováci a Maďari: Politicko-Historická Úvaha*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Slovenského Hlasníku, 1914, p. 113.

³ T. Čapek, *The Slovaks of Hungary, Slavs and Pan Slavism*, New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906, p. 92.

⁴ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 39, inv. č. 1498, poč. č. 18, ‘Korešpondencia od vedenia Slovenskej Národnej Strany [hereafter SNS] o úlohach strany a práci medzi voličmi - Uzavretie porady SNS od dňa 11.4.1901’, Martin, 11 Apr. 1901, f. 3.

⁵ A. M., Maxwell, ‘Choosing Slovakia 1795-1914: Slavic Hungary, the Czech Language and Slovak Nationalism’, (University of Wisconsin-Madison, PhD Thesis, 2003), f. 32.

⁶ Maxwell, ‘Choosing Slovakia’, f. 67; SNA, O. F. Matúš Dula, Z. Kalousková, ‘Matúš Dula, 1861-1927: Inventár’, Bratislava: Štátny Ústredný archív Slovenskej socialistickej republiky v Bratislave, Bratislava, [Unknown date], f. 1.

was the lower ranks of the Catholic clergy. Parish priests were broadly respected among the predominantly Catholic Slovak population and often spoke in the Slovak vernacular to serve their local parishioners; the priesthood was also prized as a means of education and social advancement for poorer and rural Slovak-speakers.⁷ The leadership roles within the SNP however were dominated by Lutherans.⁸ This pool of potential leaders of the Slovak national movement was very small indeed: the 1900 Hungarian census estimated that there were just forty Slovak-speaking doctors and seventy Slovak-speaking lawyers among a combined fourteen thousand such professionals working in Upper Hungary.⁹ Nor did this narrow leadership base of the SNP possess mass support among the Slovak-speaking population of the region. The SNP was not a mass political organisation, and indeed had little desire to become one; its leadership has been characterised fairly as having had ‘no special concern for the Slovak peasant and so paid little attention to him’.¹⁰

The SNP’s leaders were primarily concerned with securing Slovak language rights in Hungary, as the basis for their claim to Slovak nationhood. Slovak nationalists made their claims chiefly on a linguistic basis of nationality, in part due to the lack of a firm, historical distinction between what they viewed as ‘Slovak’ national territory from the rest of the Kingdom of Hungary. There was not an existing, or recently lapsed, political unit encompassing Upper Hungary to which Slovak nationalists could attach their claims to nationhood and political rights: as Magyar nationalists had largely brought about with the idea of ‘Hungary’ or Czech

⁷ Mannová, Slovakia, p. 220; T. A. Lorman, ‘The Making and Breaking of the Slovak Clerical Council, 1918–19’, *Central Europe*, 11: 1 (May 2013), p. 50-51; Johnson, *Slovakia, 1918-1938*, p. 6, p. 35; E. Steiner, *The Slovak Dilemma*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, p. 29.

⁸ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

nationalists sought to achieve with the 'Bohemian Crown Lands'.¹¹ Slovaks, if they were recognised at all by observers as a nation in the nineteenth century, were therefore termed a 'non-historic' nation, whose leaders lacked the constitutional arguments for language rights that were made by their counterparts on behalf of the 'historic' nations within the Habsburg Empire.¹²

The SNP argued instead for two measures to be passed to satisfy their demands for Slovak cultural rights, as well as limited political autonomy within the Kingdom of Hungary. Firstly, its leadership stood for the terms of the Slovak Memorandum of 1861, the petition submitted by Slovak nationalists to the Hungarian Parliament that, among other demands, called for the creation of an 'Upper Hungarian Slovak District', in which Slovak would be used as the language of government administration and in the courts and schools.¹³ The creation of a 'Slovak District' with a limited degree of political autonomy would have been a firm guarantee of another key demand of the Slovak national movement included in the Memorandum: that each nation within the multinational Kingdom of Hungary should receive recognition of their 'national individuality' and given equal rights to promote its 'national' culture within the Hungarian state.¹⁴ The Slovak Memorandum failed to achieve the demands of Slovak nationalists, while the hostility that it generated among leading Hungarian parliamentarians had led to an internal struggle within the Slovak national movement in the 1860s and 1870s.¹⁵ A so-called 'New School' (*nová škola*) of Slovak nationalist thought, whose protagonists argued that Slovak

¹¹ Maxwell, 'Choosing Slovakia', f. 136; E. Crankshaw, *The Fall of the House of Habsburg*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1963, p. 29.

¹² Maxwell, 'Choosing Slovakia', f. 136; Crankshaw, *The Fall of the House of Habsburg*, p. 29.

¹³ 'Memorandum národa slovenského', p. 116-117.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁵ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, London: Archibald and Constable, 1908, p. 121-122.

political demands had to be tempered in order to find an accommodation with the Magyar-speaking political elite in Hungary, emerged following the Austro-Hungarian ‘Compromise’ of 1867.¹⁶ The SNP was formed in 1871 by opponents to this political strategy, whose leaders such as Štefan Daxner and Viliam Pauliny-Tóth, became known as the ‘Old School’ (*stará škola*) due to their insistence upon the Slovak national rights as set out in the Slovak Memorandum of 1861.¹⁷ By the 1880s, the arguments of the ‘Old School’ had prevailed against their rivals and the demands made in the Slovak Memorandum consequently formed a central part of the SNP’s ideology for decades to come.¹⁸ It is worth stressing that the formation of an autonomous ‘Slovak District’ as set out in the Memorandum represented the maximum extent of the Slovak national movement’s demands before the First World War. The SNP leadership, as well as its later rivals for influence over the Slovak national movement, did not seek the creation of a distinct, ‘Slovak’ territory as a separate unit within the Habsburg Empire, let alone independent, Slovak statehood. Even their stated principle of establishing a Slovak national homeland with limited political autonomy within Hungary was dropped in practice from the SNP’s program. The party’s manifesto for the parliamentary elections in 1901, for example, did not call for the creation of a ‘Slovak district’, but more broadly supported ‘the autonomy of districts, municipalities and the churches’ in Hungary.¹⁹ Territorial autonomy within Hungary was a distant goal to the party’s leadership: securing Slovak language rights within the Hungarian state formed its main objective as a political organisation.

¹⁶ Maxwell, ‘Choosing Slovakia’, f. 66.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 67.

¹⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁹ ‘Uzavretie porady SNS od dňa 11.4.1901’, f. 3.

The SNP also called for the implementation of the Hungarian Nationalities Law of 1868 as a means of securing recognition for the Slovak language. Following the Austro-Hungarian ‘Compromise’ of the previous year, leading Hungarian Liberal politicians such as Ferenc Deák and József Eötvös sought to win support for the new regime from the non-Magyar majority of the Hungarian population by guaranteeing minority language rights.²⁰ The bill granted the right to use a particular language in the administration, courts and schools of the Hungarian state, in any district where at least twenty per cent of the population spoke that language.²¹ Where, for example, the Slovak language was used by five to twenty per cent of the population in a given district, this minority group was entitled to have at least one official qualified in its language in all branches of public administration.²² The Nationalities Law, however, granted language rights only to individual, Hungarian citizens, while rejecting any claim of collective bodies such as a ‘Slovak nation’ to political rights or territorial autonomy. It was therefore opposed by the ‘Old School’ of Slovak nationalists for not meeting the full demands of their 1861 Memorandum.²³

The individual language rights provided by the Nationalities Law were not fulfilled, as succeeding governments in Budapest sought to curb the status of the nationalities in the Hungarian state. A reform of the Hungarian courts system in 1870, for example, deliberately did not extend the provision for minority languages

²⁰ A. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 90; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 136, p. 161; O. Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1929, p. 316.

²¹ ‘Dr. J. Z’ [Anon.], ‘Základy slovenského práva’, *Národné Noviny*, 19 Aug. 1899, republished in F. Bokeš, (ed.), *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu v rokoch 1848-1914, Vol. II: 1885-1901*. Bratislava: Slovenská Akadémia Vied, 1972, p. 500; B. Cartledge, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary*, London: Timewell Press, 2006, p. 277-278.

²² ‘Dr. J. Z’, ‘Základy slovenského práva’, p. 501.

²³ B. Cartledge, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary*, London: Timewell Press, 2006, p. 278.

that had been contained in the 1868 Law.²⁴ While citizens could not be so easily deprived of their right to speak in their own language at county and local assemblies, the minutes of these meetings were recorded in Magyar alone, with the exception of a handful of German-speaking municipalities.²⁵ The Nationalities Law was also interpreted by successive Hungarian governments through its preamble, which stressed that the act had been designed to preserve ‘the political unity of the Magyar nation (*magyar nemzet*)’.²⁶ Hungarian parliamentarians and judges from the 1870s viewed minority language rights as a challenge to this ‘unity’ of a Magyar nation-state in Hungary and so ignored the law’s provisions.²⁷ As the Hungarian government under Kálmán Tisza pursued a policy of ‘Magyarisation’ that closed Slovak institutions like *Matica Slovenská*, as well as secondary schools conducted in minority languages, the full implementation of the Nationalities Law became a key part of the SNP’s political goals. The party’s election manifesto of 1901 called for the provision of all Slovak language rights in state administration and schools ‘in accordance with the 1868 Nationalities Law’.²⁸ Slovak nationalists embraced the Nationalities Law in the context of the Hungarian government’s Magyarisation policies. As Slovak national institutions were dissolved and the legally guaranteed provisions for minority languages were watered down from 1870, Slovak nationalist demands for the recognition of Slovak ‘national individuality’ by the Hungarian state, together with a Slovak national homeland with limited political autonomy, faded from public view. Having been opposed by Slovak nationalist leaders in a more confident political mood at the time of its passage, the Nationalities Law

²⁴ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 154.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151; p. 153.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁷ *Idem.*

²⁸ ‘Uzavretie porady SNS od dňa 11.4.1901’, f. 3.

became a key part of the SNP's rear-guard efforts to counter the 'Magyarisation' of Slovak-speakers in Hungary by the 1880s.

The SNP was not a significant factor in elections to the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest, which held extensive powers to govern Hungary after the constitutional settlement of 1867. The party boycotted parliamentary elections between 1878 and 1901: a stance was ostensibly based on 'the violence and corruption against the non-Magyar nationalities' that Slovak nationalists claimed was the decisive factor in the outcome of Hungarian elections.²⁹ There was certainly some truth to the SNP's allegations. Hungarian elections were still conducted as public occasions and festivals, where the decision of the voter was visible and could be influenced by intimidation or bribery: Slovak and other minority nationalists called for the secret ballot to be introduced as a response to instances of voter intimidation by local magnates.³⁰ Slovak nationalist complaints about the public ballot were compounded by more overt manipulation - electoral rolls were liable to gerrymandering by county officials, while both the police and the army were sometimes used to bar Slovak members of the electorate from reaching the assigned public space in order to cast their vote.³¹ R. W. Seton-Watson, an eyewitness to the Hungarian elections of 1910, judged that electoral contests in Upper Hungary had taken on the characteristics of a 'civil war' rather than a representation of the electorate's will, and concluded that 'for

²⁹ 'Osvedčenie ústredného volebného výboru Slovenskej národnej strany o príčinách nesúčasti strany pri snemových voľbách roku 1887', *Národné Noviny*, 2 June 1887, in Bokeš (ed.), *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu*, Vol. II, p. 78.

³⁰ 'Uzavretie porady SNS od dňa 11.4.1901', f. 3.

³¹ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 256; R. W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks*, London: Hutchinson and Co., 1943, p. 269.

the past forty years an honestly conducted election in a non-Magyar constituency has been a very rare occurrence'.³²

The SNP's policy of 'passivity' towards Hungarian parliamentary politics also stemmed from an assessment of the party's political weakness. The franchise was limited by property qualifications that denied the vote to the vast majority of the population, including urban workers as well as the rural peasantry.³³ During the second half of the nineteenth century, it is estimated that only 6% of Hungarian males had the right to vote in parliamentary elections.³⁴ These measures denied the vote to millions of Magyar-speakers as well, but given that barely a few thousand Slovak-speakers were found within the middle classes of Hungary - and were practically non-existent among the gentry and high nobility - the restricted franchise greatly limited the potential base of support for Slovak nationalist candidates at elections. The SNP joined with Romanian and Serb nationalist parties in calling for universal male suffrage: a measure that would have substantially increased the share of these nationalities in the Hungarian electorate.³⁵ The only Slovak nationalist to win a seat in the Hungarian Parliament, Pauliny-Tóth in 1869, did so campaigning among Slovaks and Serbs living in the 'Bačka' region of southern Hungary (modern Vojvodina in Serbia).³⁶ The SNP's decision, from 1878, to boycott parliamentary

³² C. and H. Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary*, London: Methuen, 1981, p. 81; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 256-257.

³³ Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 229; P. A. Hanebrink, *In Defence of Christian Hungary: Religion, Nationalism and Anti-Semitism, 1890-1944*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006, p. 37-38.

³⁴ L. Péter (ed. M. Lojkó), *Hungary's Long Nineteenth Century: Constitutional and Democratic Traditions in a European Perspective – Collected Studies*, Leiden and Boston, MA: Koninklijke Brill, 2012, p. 317.

³⁵ 'Austria-Hungary', *The Times*, 12 Aug. 1895, p. 5-6; SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 39, inv. č. 1498, poč. č. 18, 'Korešpondencia od vedenia SNS o úlohach strany a práci medzi voličmi', Pavol Mudroň to Pavol Blaho, 15 May 1899, f. 1.

³⁶ Johnson, *Slovakia: 1918-1938*, p. 43; A. Kopčok, 'Milan Hodza and the Lowland Slovaks', in M. Pekník, (ed.), *Milan Hodža: Statesman and Politician*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2007, p. 79.

elections was therefore as much an admission of its electoral weakness in Upper Hungary, as a protest against the corruption of the electoral authorities. Its decision, however, only worsened the predicament of the Slovak national movement in Hungary. The seats in Upper Hungary that were left entirely uncontested by Slovak nationalists became the strongest base of support for the governing Liberal party, which progressively extended the policy of ‘Magyarisation’ of Slovak and other minority nationalities in Hungary.³⁷ This ‘stupid abstention’ of the Slovak nationalist leadership from electoral politics, as the policy was later described by Seton-Watson, meant that successive Liberal governments largely perpetuated themselves using the seats held in non-Magyar electoral districts.

The Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary turned to non-parliamentary forms of agitation, as an alternative to electoral activism. In 1895, the Slovak, Romanian and Serbian nationalist parties convened a ‘Congress of Non-Magyar Nationalities’ in Budapest, which aimed to publish a common declaration of their political goals in Hungary.³⁸ The Congress affirmed the commitment of the minority nationalist parties to pursuing their goals within the existing borders of Hungary, with the first point of the document stating that non-Magyar nationalities ‘wished to protect and maintain in all aspects the unity and integrity’ of the Hungarian Kingdom.³⁹ The Congress called for non-Magyar nationalities to be granted ‘complete freedom to use their national language in the courts and

³⁷ R. W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks*, p. 270.

³⁸ ‘Výzva provizórneho výboru rumunsko-slovensko-srbského národného spolčenia na konanie kongresu predstaviteľov nemadžarských národností v Budapešti kvôli dohodnutiu programu ich vzájomnej politickej spolupráce v Uhorsku’, *Národné Noviny*, 23 July 1895, republished in Bokeš (ed.), *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu*, Vol. II, p. 273.

³⁹ ‘Program spolčenia národných stranách rumunských, slovenských a srbských v Uhorsku a Sedmohradsku, schvalený kongresom nemadžarských národností v Uhorsku, konanom v Budapešti’, *Národné Noviny*, 20 Aug. 1895, in Bokeš (ed.), *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu*, Vol. II, p. 277.

administration [...] according to language frontiers and in other autonomous bodies (district councils, town municipalities)' within Hungary.⁴⁰ It also called for the implementation of the 1868 Nationalities Law - though subject to amendments that the non-Magyar nationalities could propose after gaining seats in the Hungarian Parliament.⁴¹ The Slovak, Serb and Romanian nationalist delegates argued that 'Hungary is not the kind of state in which a single nation can provide it with its national character: only through its sum, through all of its nations, united as a whole, can we give Hungary its character'.⁴² In the following year, Slovak, Serb and Romanian nationalists protested against events held by the Hungarian government to commemorate the thousand year anniversary of 'the Magyar tribe' occupying the Danube basin of Hungary. Their formal protest claimed that Magyar millennial celebrations 'must be considered as an insult to the millions [of people] and to the majority of the nations who form our country'.⁴³ Slovak nationalists objected to the content of the Magyar millennial celebrations on the grounds that they 'would show before Europe that the Hungarian state was and is a Magyar nation-state', a claim that was vigorously opposed in principle by the leaders of the minority nationality parties.⁴⁴ Protests from the combined Slovak, Serb and Romanian nationalists against Magyar millennial celebrations spread not only to Vienna but also Paris, where a second 'Congress of Non-Magyar Nationalities' was held by émigré nationalists in 1896.⁴⁵ While the non-Magyar nationalities were capable of stating their collective opposition to the policies of the Hungarian state, the impact of this agitation on

⁴⁰ 'Program spolčenia národných stranách rumunských, slovenských a srbských v Uhorsku', p. 277-278

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 279.

⁴² Ibid., p. 277-278.

⁴³ *Národné Noviny*, 30 Apr. 1896, p. 1.

⁴⁴ Idem.

⁴⁵ Mannová (ed.), *Slovakia*, p. 212.

Hungarian politics should not be exaggerated. Each of the Slovak, Serb and Romanian nationalist parties was subject to problems such as restricted franchise, electoral gerrymandering and trials of nationalist leaders for ‘incitement’ within the nationalist press that greatly limited their political influence in Hungary. The value of the Slovak National Party to this coalition was largely symbolic at the time, even more so as the official nationalist party of Slovaks still refused to participate in elections in Upper Hungary. The combination of non-Magyar nationalist parties was sufficient to draw wider European attention to the ‘national question’ in Hungary but only modestly: the anti-millennial demonstration held in Paris was covered, while the common manifesto of non-Magyar nationalities in Hungary attracted the interest of *The Times* of London following the Congress of Nationalities in 1895.⁴⁶ Given the limited opportunities that the weak, Slovak and other minority nationalist organisations had to advance their cause in Hungary, this probably represented the best outcome that they could have hoped for.

The political strategy of the Slovak nationalist leadership was challenged by two new forces in Upper Hungary that played a significant role in returning Slovak nationalists to Hungarian parliamentary elections from 1901. The first of these forces to shape Slovak nationalism was the rise of the Hungarian Catholic People’s Party (*Katolikus Néppárt* in Magyar), whose electoral successes in Upper Hungary threatened to remove Slovak nationalists even from their marginal status within Hungarian politics. This political party was founded by Count Ferdinand Zichy in 1895 in opposition to measures such as obligatory civil marriage, which was introduced to the Hungarian parliament for debate by the Liberal administration in

⁴⁶ ‘Austria-Hungary’, *The Times*, 12 Aug. 1895, p. 5-6; ‘Austria-Hungary’, *The Times*, 20 Aug. 1895, p. 5; ‘Agrarian Socialism in Hungary’, *The Times*, 17 Jan. 1898, p. 6.

1892.⁴⁷ The Liberal government also sought to elevate Judaism to the category of a ‘received’ faith in Hungary, giving Jews the right to state funding for religious schools and other state privileges.⁴⁸ As Paul Hanebrink has pointed out, many of the leading Hungarian Liberal politicians who undertook these measures were in fact Catholic by personal faith but considered it to be a matter distinguishable from their pursuit of liberal and nationalist political goals.⁴⁹ Supporters of the Catholic Church’s existing privileges conducted mass public protests against civil marriage and the ‘reception’ of Judaism within the Hungarian state, that failed to prevent the implementation of the reforms in 1895.⁵⁰ Many of its participants consequently helped to form County Zichy’s Catholic People’s Party, in which maintaining the Christian identity of the Hungarian state was identified as being a key political objective: a move that was encouraged by the Vatican and by the example of clerical or ‘Ultramontane’ political parties that were formed elsewhere in Europe at this time.⁵¹

The Catholic People’s Party posed a largely unintended threat to the Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary, for the two movements held similar political outlooks. The SNP shared the new clerical party’s hostility to secular measures such as civil marriage. An editorial in its *Národné Noviny* newspaper claimed that a shared belief was held by Slovak Catholics and Lutherans that ‘marriage must be regarded as a church institution’ in which only ‘a Christian man with a Christian

⁴⁷ Felak, *At the Price of the Republic*, p. 10.

⁴⁸ J. M. Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Hanebrink, *In Defence of Christian Hungary*, p. 22.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23, p. 27-28.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

woman alone' could form such a union.⁵² The party's leader Pavol Mudroň, declared in 1894 that were the 'religious foundation of marriage' to be removed, Hungarian citizens would find themselves 'in a state like that of animals [...] where polygamy and polyandry would be permissible'.⁵³ The Catholic People's Party argued for a conciliatory approach towards Slovak and other non-Magyar nationalities living in Hungary. The party's first manifesto, published in February 1895, criticised the policies of 'Magyarisation' as well as the criminal prosecution of minority nationalists by the Liberal regime in Hungary: the party instead called for a 'just and fair-minded' consideration of the grievances of non-Magyar nationalities and declared its support for the 1868 Nationalities Law being implemented in Hungary.⁵⁴ That the manifesto of the People's Party was published in full in *Národné Noviny* newspaper – the SNP's official organ - signified that the views of the People's Party were amenable to the Slovak nationalist leadership. The SNP politician Rudolf Markovič further declared at a public meeting in 1896 that Slovak Lutherans - who formed the principal leadership of the SNP - could find common cause with the Catholic People's Party, for the party 'stood on a Christian basis' in opposition to the secular, Liberal government.⁵⁵ A declaration that confirmed the SNP boycott of the 1896 Hungarian elections gave Slovak electors 'a free hand' to vote for candidates 'opposed to the governing, Liberal regime', which meant in practice support for candidates of the Catholic People's Party.⁵⁶ Within a few years of the Catholic People's Party's formation, however, many of its Slovak-speaking supporters judged

⁵² *Národné Noviny*, 7 Jan. 1893, p. 1.

⁵³ *Národné Noviny*, 22 May 1894, p. 1.

⁵⁴ *Národné Noviny*, 2 Feb. 1895, p. 1-2.

⁵⁵ 'Prejav dra. Rudolfa Markoviča, na zhromaždení Ľudovej strany v Novom Meste nad Váhom', *Národné Noviny*, 29 July 1896, republished in Bokeš (ed.), *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu*, p. 315.

⁵⁶ *Národné Noviny*, 19 Oct. 1896, p. 1.

its commitment to Slovak national rights to be purely rhetorical. Slovak Catholic priests such as Andrej Hlinka - who unsuccessfully stood for as a candidate for the Hungarian People's Party in 1898 - left the party a few years later to join the Slovak nationalists.⁵⁷ In time Hlinka and other Slovak Catholic leaders of his generation successfully combined the populist, clerical ideas of the Hungarian People's Party with Slovak nationalism. This formed the basis for a campaign of nationalist agitation among the Slovak Catholic population in Upper Hungary, with Hlinka becoming the leader of an independent, 'Slovak People's Party' that split from the Slovak nationalists in 1913.⁵⁸

The electoral breakthrough of Zichy's Catholic People's Party owed little to the tacit endorsement by the Slovak nationalist leadership and more to the latter's long period of inactivity in electoral politics. In the same way that parliamentary seats for Upper Hungary, having been uncontested by Slovak nationalists, formed one of the strongest bases of the Liberals' political support in Hungary, the new Catholic party easily positioned itself as the chief opponent to the governing regime in these districts. Upper Hungary also had a roughly 75% Catholic population in 1900 compared with 52% in Hungary; even accounting for the limited franchise system in place, electoral districts in Upper Hungary were more conducive to the People's Party clerical platform than the Magyar-dominated districts of central Hungary, many of which had a majority Protestant electorate.⁵⁹

There was also a substantial anti-Semitic element to the People's Party campaign that held populist appeal among the electorate in Upper Hungary,

⁵⁷ Felak, *'At the Price of the Republic'*, p. 10-11.

⁵⁸ *Slovenské ľudové Noviny*, [Pressburg], 1 Aug. 1913, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Mannová (ed.), *Slovakia*, p. 219; Hanebrink, *In Defence of Christian Hungary*, p. 37-38.

including many Slovaks.⁶⁰ Aleš Bákonyi, a Slovak-speaker who was one of the Hungarian People's Party's founders, argued in an article published in a Catholic magazine in 1894 that food shortages in Hungary had been caused by Jewish-owned flour mills, whose product had been chiefly sold to the market instead of feeding the local population.⁶¹ An election pamphlet from the 1896 Hungarian election campaign was summarised as follows in *The Times*:

It calls on the Slovaks to defend their faith and nationality and declares that an attempt is being made to rob them of their religion. They are called upon to stone the Jews, who live in luxury at their expense. They are instigated to rise against the oppression of the provincial authorities and magistrates, who are represented as unfaithful servants that deserve to be scourged. In conclusion, they are asked why they should permit the use of any other language than their own.⁶²

The document was disavowed by the Hungarian People Party, who charged that it had been created by the party's enemies to discredit it; but the document was judged by *The Times*' correspondent to have only given 'expression to views, or rather prejudices, that have already in the hands of prominent members of the party served as a most effective means of inciting the Slav population against the Government'.⁶³ The People's Party achieved its breakthrough success at a by-election in the town of Levoča/Lócs/Leutschau⁶⁴ in 1894, in which the success of the winning candidate, a professor at a Catholic seminary, was attributed to the 'considerable number of Slovak electors in the district'.⁶⁵ The party contested ninety-eight seats across Hungary in the 1896 elections and secured notable levels of support in Upper

⁶⁰ Mannová (ed.), *Slovakia*, p. 219; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 185-186.

⁶¹ Aleš Bákonyi, 'Nová stránka', *Uverejnil Kresťan*, Budapest, 2 Dec. 1894, in Bokeš (ed.), *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu*, Vol. II, p. 235.

⁶² 'Austria-Hungary', *The Times*, 23 July 1896, p. 5.

⁶³ *Idem*.

⁶⁴ The name of the town in the Slovak, Magyar and German languages respectively.

⁶⁵ 'Austria-Hungary', *The Times*, 4 Jan. 1895, p. 3.

Hungary from Slovak electors, who - as Seton-Watson argued a decade later - 'had been encouraged by their clergy to regard the Church Laws as a fresh stage in the advance of the Jews and the freemasons'.⁶⁶ In the absence of a large middle class, the Slovak electorate consisted mainly of slightly better-off farmers or small tradesmen, groups that were prone to identifying local Jewish financiers and landowners as the chief source of their economic insecurities, the bankruptcy of small businesses and the accumulation of farm holdings.⁶⁷ The People's Party election campaigns popularised a belief that the Liberal government was viewed as beholden to Jewish influence in its economic policies and in the emerging conflict between the Catholic Church and a liberalising Hungarian state.

The electoral appeal of the People's Party posed a serious challenge to the credibility of the Slovak nationalist leadership in Martin. Had this clerical political movement secured the lasting allegiance of the Catholic portion of the Slovak-speaking electorate - as seemed possible when the People's Party emerged in the 1890s - then the influence of Slovak nationalism in this critical constituency could have been undermined. The rise of the Hungarian People's Party as a political force in Upper Hungary played a major role in undermining the Slovak National Party's so-called 'senseless policy of passivity'.⁶⁸ Its relatively successful appeal to Slovak electors in Upper Hungary based on clerical, rather than national, politics obliged Slovak nationalists to compete for the allegiance of Slovak voters and to assert the importance of their nationalist agenda.

The strategy of the Slovak National Party was further challenged by a new generation of Slovak intellectuals, who argued that popular agitation was needed to

⁶⁶ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 185-186.

⁶⁷ Idem; Hanebrink, *In Defence of Christian Hungary*, p. 30-31; Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 43.

⁶⁸ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 185-186.

achieve support for Slovak nationalism among the wider population of Upper Hungary. This new current of Slovak political thought was set out by a loose group of writers and politicians, who became known to some contemporaries and most later historians as ‘Hlasists’. They were named after the monthly journal *Hlas* (‘The Voice’) which was published from 1898 and served as the first, public expression of these views. In addition to *Hlas*, which ceased publication in 1904, its major contributors later set up the journal *Prúdy* (Currents) from 1909 until the First World War.⁶⁹ Milan Hodža also established a Slovak-language newspaper in Budapest from 1903, entitled *Slovenský týždenník* (The Slovak Weekly).⁷⁰ Hodža’s newspaper adopted many of the political views expressed within *Hlas*, which formed part of the basis for the ‘nation-building and political-organisational activities’ conceived by this emerging Slovak nationalist political leader.⁷¹ The intellectuals who contributed to *Hlas* and later journals of a similar nature in Upper Hungary self-identified as being ‘Progressives’ (*pokrokáři*); the term was also used somewhat pejoratively by rival factions within Slovak national life, such as the priest and clerical politician Andrej Hlinka.⁷² Both this term and ‘Hlasist’ will be used interchangeably in this study to identify the same group of Slovak nationalist intellectuals.

Many of the leading Hlasist members developed their political thoughts within Slovak student organisations at universities in different parts of Austria-

⁶⁹ Mannová, *Slovakia: A Concise History*, p. 213.

⁷⁰ D. Horná, ‘Milan Hodža (An Outline Biography)’, in Pekník, (ed.), *Statesman and Politician*. Bratislava: VEDA, 2007, p. 25.

⁷¹ Horná, ‘Milan Hodža (An Outline Biography)’, p. 26-27.

⁷² ‘Masarykists’ was also used to highlight the *Hlas* writers’ support of the Czech philosopher, who was himself targeted as an atheist. See *Slovenské ľudové Noviny*, 16 May 1913, p. 3; *Slovenské ľudové Noviny*, 28 Mar. 1912, p. 1.

Hungary.⁷³ One such organisation, named *Detvan*, was formed for Slovak-speaking students in Prague in 1882. Its inaugural chairman was Jaroslav Vlček, a professor of mixed Czech and Slovak origin at Charles' University in Prague, who 'introduced a small number of Detvan members to the secrets of Czech history, literature and its political issues'.⁷⁴ A similar organisation named *Tatran* was formed among Slovak students in Vienna and many of the Hlasist leaders played a leading role in these two particular student societies.⁷⁵ Pavol Blaho, publisher of *Hlas* in 1898, served as chairman of the *Tatran* society during his medical studies in Vienna; Vavro Šrobár, the magazine's chief editor, was at the same time chair of *Detvan* in Prague.⁷⁶ Milan Štefánik, the Slovak-born, French national astronomer and aviator who played a leading role in the Czechoslovak independence movement in the First World War also served as secretary of *Detvan* during his studies in Prague from 1898. Štefánik reaffirmed the Hlasist ideological current among a slightly younger generation of Slovak students in the society against conservative opposition.⁷⁷ Contemporary developments in Czech nationalist politics had a major impact on the Hlasist ideology that emerged among this section of the Slovak student societies' membership studying outside of Hungary. The most widely recognised influence was that of 'realism': a modernist philosophy that had been cultivated by several professors at Charles University during the 1880s.⁷⁸ In the words of one of its Slovak protagonists, the realist philosophy sought to place 'concrete logic' at the centre of

⁷³ E. Bosák, 'Czech-Slovak Relations and the Student Organisation "Detvan", 1882-1914', in S. J. Kirschbaum (ed.), *Slovak Politics: Essays on Slovak History in Honour of Joseph M. Kirschbaum*. Cleveland, OH: Slovak Institute, 1983, p. 7.

⁷⁴ SNA, O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 22, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 597, 'Hlasizmus II', Anton Štefánek, 'Slovenskí študenti v Prahe', 287/22.

⁷⁵ O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 22, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 597, 'Hlasizmus II', Anton Štefánek, 'Pred 50 rokmi', *Nové Slovo*, Bratislava, 24 June 1948, 23/22.

⁷⁶ *Národné Noviny*, 13 Nov. 1894, p. 2-3.

⁷⁷ Bosák, 'The Student Organisation "Detvan"', p. 27-31.

⁷⁸ Štefánek, 'Slovenskí študenti v Prahe', 308/22.

one's perspective of the world and to serve as the basis for forming the institutions of society 'without regard for existing traditions and officially held knowledge'.⁷⁹ The most influential Realist philosopher for the Slovak Hlasist group was Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, a lecturer and later professor of philosophy at Charles University; Masaryk made his name within Czech and Slav political circles by intervening in the so-called 'Manuscript Controversy', in which he supported the case of a scholar that a series of supposedly historic, Czech nationalist manuscripts had been forged and held no value.⁸⁰ Masaryk later justified his intervention in this controversial episode on his own realist philosophy, declaring that he believed that Czech national culture 'could not be based on a lie'.⁸¹ The impact of Masaryk's actions and the broader realist philosophy that he represented influenced Slovak Hlasist intellectuals to base their claims on the 'natural rights' of a Slovak-speaking nation to cultural and political rights within the Hungarian state.⁸²

'Hlasist' intellectuals also drew from the 'Realist' current of Czech nationalism the belief that a political agenda that incorporated progressive social and economic goals was required to cultivate support for Slovak nationalism, particularly targeted at rural workers and small landowners in Upper Hungary. The journalist and Slovak nationalist politician Milan Hodža set out the basis of his reformist and agrarian approach to Slovak national politics in an issue of *Hlas*, declaring that:

Our Slovak politics cannot be politically and economically conservative because we do not have landed aristocrats. Our aristocracy along with the bankrupt gentry [...] joined with the Magyar nobility. We therefore have

⁷⁹ Štefánek, 'Slovenskí študenti v Prahe', 308/22.

⁸⁰ P. Richterová, 'The Manuscripts of Grünberg and Köninghof: Romantic Lies About the Glorious Past of the Czech Nation', in J. M. Bák, P. J. Geary and G. Klaniczay (eds.), *Manufacturing a Past for the Present: Forgery and Authenticity in Medievalist Texts and Objects in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2014, p. 26-29.

⁸¹ K. Čapek (trans. M. H. Helm), *Talks with T. G. Masaryk*, North Haven, CT: Catbird Press, 1995, p. 142-143.

⁸² Štefánek, 'Slovenskí študenti v Prahe', 314/22.

nothing to conserve. Nor are the large commercial or industrial concerns formed under a Slovak name [...] therefore 'liberal etiquette' cannot be our political motto... for liberalism is based on the principle of 'laissez faire', economically speaking[...] that in economic life the strong will preside over the weak.⁸³

Hodža as much as fellow Hlasist intellectuals like Vavro Šrobár instead argued that the 'moral regeneration' of the Slovak nation in Hungary could not be achieved without economic and social reform being placed at the centre of the Slovak nationalist manifesto and being spread by popular agitation.⁸⁴ Hodža claimed that the Slovak nation, bereft of aristocratic support as it was, consisted only 'of two classes: the intelligentsia and the people'.⁸⁵ A chief goal of the Hlasists was to 'end the partition' between these the two classes and to create a 'popular intelligentsia' that would express social and economic goals as part of a Slovak nationalist political programme that could appeal to the masses.⁸⁶

The Hlasist group also criticised the SNP leadership for its perceived focus on the cultural and intellectual aspects of nationalism. Vavro Šrobár bluntly stated in the founding issue of *Hlas* that 'this handful of people, representing the intelligentsia, is not the nation', and declared that his new journal was published so that 'the ordinary Slovak man may morally revive himself'.⁸⁷ In a *Hlas* article in 1903, Milan Hodža asserted the elite, intellectual nationalism of the SNP leadership to be a 'blind' political strategy for the Slovak national movement. 'It is time', he wrote:

to begin freeing the Slovak from the slavery of superstition, stupidity and material poverty. The weapon here cannot be exclusive nationalism or

⁸³ M. Hodža, 'Realizmus u nás', reproduced in SNA, O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 22, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 597, 'Hlasizmus II', Anton Štefánek, 'Politický realizmus na Slovensku', 441/22.

⁸⁴ V. Šrobár, 'Naše Snahy', *Hlas*, [Skalica, Upper Hungary], 1 July 1898, republished in Bokeš (ed.) *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu*, Vol. II, p. 402; Johnson, *Slovakia, 1918-1938*, p. 44.

⁸⁵ Hodža, 'Realizmus u nás', 443/2.

⁸⁶ *Idem*.

⁸⁷ Šrobár, 'Naše Snahy', p. 402.

raging nationalism, since in raging struggle we will waste all our strength and remain centuries behind. The young Slovak intelligentsia is faced with new tasks, a new kind of work, since our elders will not renounce their faith in the almighty power of mere nationalism.⁸⁸

In this way, the Slovak National Party leadership in Martin was caricatured by its Hlasist critics as out of touch with the Slovak-speaking masses. The Hlasist leadership promoted the use of *drobná práca* - best translated as 'small-scale work' - a strategy that was being advocated by Masaryk within the Czech nationalist movement at the same time and taken up by Hlasists as a means of generating nationalist sentiment and political support among the Slovak-speaking population.⁸⁹ Hlasists sought to form cooperatives of Slovak entrepreneurs, bankers and tradesmen: Šrobár's founding article of *Hlas* called for the founding of such 'business organisations' by Slovaks to provide mutual support to their national compatriots.⁹⁰ This argument was extended to support the creation of Slovak agricultural and industrial societies to serve different sectors of the economy, as well as the formation of student and agitational societies to 'morally revive' Slovaks through public education classes and temperance campaigns.⁹¹

The organisation of Slovak-speakers of Upper Hungary into societies based on Slovak nationality, combined with populist campaigns by Slovak intellectuals on major social and economic questions such as land reform were a key part of the Hlasist policy of small-scale work. Hlasist leaders viewed the success of these goals as an essential precondition to securing the support of the Slovak masses for a

⁸⁸ Quoted in K. Kollár, 'The Development of Understanding of the Problem of Nationalism and the Nation in the Work of Milan Hodža', in Pekník (ed.), *Milan Hodža*, p. 61-62.

⁸⁹ O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 22, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 188, 'Hlasizmus III', Anton Štefánek, 'Svetozvár Hurban Vajanský a Hlasisti', [1956], 940/22; Štefánek, 'Pred 50 rokmi', 24/22; Bosák, 'The Student Organisation "Detvan"', p. 15.

⁹⁰ Šrobár, 'Naše Snahy', p. 405

⁹¹ Štefánek, 'Pred 50 rokmi', 24/22.

nationalist political program.⁹² Šrobár also called for Slovak nationalist leaders to provide financial support in order ‘to send lawyers, medics and industrialists to higher education and lower business schools in Austria and America, where our organised brothers live: this would be our goal and our most praiseworthy national work’.⁹³ This idea drew from Šrobár’s own experience in determining that Slovaks would be better placed to organise themselves beyond the reach of the Hungarian state, as well demonstrating that the rapid growth of Slovak American organisations had already been noted by Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary by the 1890s.⁹⁴ Hlasist support for the formation of agrarian and small business co-operatives suited the economic pattern of the western counties of Upper Hungary, where a small but relatively prosperous set of independent Slovak-speaking farmers and businessmen had become established. The Hlasist movement therefore gained its modest base of popular influence in Skalica/Szabolca and other small towns in the counties of Nitra and Pressburg in western Upper Hungary; Šrobár and other activists were also active in the county of Liptov, which overlapped with the principal area of the SNP’s support.⁹⁵ Much like the traditional Slovak nationalist leadership that they criticised, though, the Hlasists had no discernible influence in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary at the turn of the twentieth century. The Hlasist attempts to spread Slovak nationalism in Upper Hungary through small-scale works or *drobná práca* had similar geographical limitations as the activities conducted by the SNP leadership in Martin.

⁹² Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 44.

⁹³ Šrobár, ‘Naše Snahy’, p. 405.

⁹⁴ Štefánek, ‘Svetozvár Hurban Vajanský a Hlasisti’, 940/22.

⁹⁵ O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 22, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 351, ‘Hlasizmus IV’, Anton Štefánek ‘Socializmus a Hlasizmus’, 332/23; Felak, ‘At the Price of the Republic’, p. 11-12.

The impact of the progressive Hlasist agenda and its leadership's criticism of the Slovak nationalist leadership was clear to contemporaries. The Slovak American editors of the National Slovak Society almanac declared that the publication of *Hlas* 'had the effects of a bomb within Slovakia [Upper Hungary]', explaining how:

A conflict developed between the Martin nationalists and Skalica which lasted for four years. It is true that this fight caused much acrimony in Slovak society on both sides, but on the whole, it yielded more good than bad [results] for the nation [...] life in Slovakia today is more energetic than it has been for many years.⁹⁶

Despite the Hlasist commentary being highly critical of the established leadership of the SNP, its intellectuals became incorporated into the SNP's party ranks: where they formed a significant ideological faction attempting to insert their agenda of social and economic reform into the Slovak nationalist manifesto.⁹⁷ With the addition of Hlasist leaders and politicians like Pavol Blaho and Milan Hodža, the SNP began to campaign among the (still limited) Slovak-speaking electorate of Upper Hungary using not only the intellectual appeal to a common, linguistic nationality, but also on policy measures such as land reform and business cooperatives that could appeal to the social and economic interests of Slovak-speaking farmers and tradesmen. The criticism by Hlasist intellectuals of the party's passive electoral strategy also contributed to the SNP's decision to participate in Hungarian parliamentary elections from 1901.⁹⁸

Slovak nationalism in Upper Hungary was transformed at the beginning of the twentieth century due to the combined pressures of clerical and progressive movements on the Slovak National Party. The rise of the Hungarian People's Party,

⁹⁶ Balch Institute/HSP, 'National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1893-1905/6 (incomp.)', Box 1, *Národný Kalendár pre rímsko a grécko-katolíkov a evanjelikov na obyčajný rok 1903*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerikánsko Slovenských Novín, 1903, p. 159.

⁹⁷ 'Uzavretie porady SNS od dňa 11.4.1901', f. 3.

⁹⁸ *Idem*.

which targeted Slovak-speaking voters as a significant base of its political support, supplanted Slovak nationalism to become the party of opposition to Hungarian liberalism in Upper Hungary during the second half of the 1890s. The SNP was also criticised from within by a new generation of Slovak-speaking intellectuals who called for an end to the party's passive electoral approach and for social and economic policies to be emphasised in its nationalist manifesto. An editorial of *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* in 1900, the leading Slovak-language newspaper by circulation on either side of the Atlantic, contributed to the pressure on the SNP leadership for change, with Peter Rovnianek admonishing them for 'carrying out nothing for the success of the people'.⁹⁹ In this context, the existing political strategy of the SNP was unsustainable. From 1901, the party abandoned its boycott and took up active parliamentary campaigning in Hungary.

The reversal of the Slovak National Party's stance after more than a generation of electoral passivity was caused not only by pressures placed upon its leadership, but also by the changing political conditions in Upper Hungary that had been demonstrated by events throughout the 1890s. The Hungarian People's Party had shown, for example, that a challenge to the governing, Liberal regime could achieve some electoral success in Upper Hungary. Some of the Slovak-speaking Catholics who had been brought into political life by the clerical People's Party, including future, nationalist leaders like Andrej Hlinka, now sought a party that was genuinely committed to Slovak national rights. The new emphasis placed on public agitation and the forming of social organisations by the Hlasist faction also offered a new outlet for Slovak nationalist agitation. The prospect of the SNP achieving a

⁹⁹ SNA, O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 22, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 351, 'Hlasizmus IV', A. Štefánek, 'Veci Slovenské', 40/23.

modest degree of success at the ballot box - even under a voting system and conditions that their party still held to be unjust - was now a realistic and necessary goal. The party's leader Pavol Mudroň reached out to both the Hlasists as well as disaffected clerical figures like Andrej Hlinka and František Skyčák in 1899 in order to establish a common political manifesto for the forthcoming Hungarian elections.¹⁰⁰ Slovak nationalists campaigned during the Hungarian election of 1901 calling for the implementation of the 1868 Nationalities Law, which was in accordance with the Martin leadership's traditional goals.¹⁰¹ At the same time, however, the Slovak nationalist manifesto also took up the Hlasist proposal for the creation of business and industrial schools in Upper Hungary. It also called for the repeal of the Hungarian civil marriage law and the guaranteed autonomy of churches (including their religious schools) from state intervention: measures that could appeal to Slovak Catholics from a clerical, political perspective.¹⁰² The SNP undertook structural reforms to increase its representation across a wider area of Upper Hungary: its total number of party activists still amounted to just a few hundred members, but now included Hlasists as well as former People's Party candidates like Hlinka, who switched political parties to join the SNP in 1901.¹⁰³ With a broader political agenda in place, and a campaign that spanned the western and central counties of Upper Hungary, Slovak nationalists contested Hungarian parliamentary elections in 1901 for the first time in a generation: winning four seats from the

¹⁰⁰ Mudroň to Blaho, 15 May 1899, f. 1.

¹⁰¹ 'Uzavretie porady SNS od dňa 11.4.1901', f. 3.

¹⁰² *Idem*.

¹⁰³ Felak, 'At the Price of the Republic', p. 11-12.

thirteen that they contested.¹⁰⁴ This was a modest victory, but it marked an end to the electoral passivity that had characterised Slovak nationalist politics within Hungary.

By 1900, the Slovak national movement consisted of three identifiable factions, each possessing a distinct political ideology on which their nationalism was grounded. The Slovak National Party continued to be led by the relatively conservative and religiously Lutheran ‘Old School’ of nationalists centred in Martin, including the party leader Pavol Mudroň and the notable Slovak nationalist writer and poet, Svetozvár Hurban-Vajanský. Their appeal to Slovak national rights continued to be based on the claim to nationhood, staked out by the previous generation of Slovak nationalists in the Slovak Memorandum of 1861, as well as the Nationalities Law that promised to protect the rights of minority language speakers in Hungary but was never implemented. The leadership incorporated its Hlasist critics into the party, who represented a self-styled ‘progressive’ nationalist faction, that called for social and economic reforms to develop the moral and material strength of the Slovak nation in Upper Hungary. Some of these Hlasist intellectuals, such as Milan Hodža, soon rose to prominence within the SNP and staked out an emerging form of ‘agrarian’ politics through independent journalism. Other Hlasist intellectuals, most notably the *Hlas* editor Vavro Šrobár, contributed to a developing anticlerical current among a minority of Slovak nationalists by 1900. These two factions were joined by Slovak clerical nationalists who abandoned the Hungarian People’s Party: an event that brought important figures like the pre-war parliamentarian František Skyčák and of course Andrej Hlinka into the SNP. The SNP was transformed into a broader umbrella organisation for each of these groups,

¹⁰⁴ Felak, ‘At the Price of the Republic’, p. 11-12.

whose political co-operation was almost solely based on their shared goal of Slovak national rights in Hungary. The party therefore became representative of a genuine Slovak 'national movement', in which the role of the party leadership was to placate the divergent interests within the organisation until its chief goal of securing Slovak national rights in Hungary could be achieved. Slovak nationalist politics proceeded in this manner until the eve of the First World War as a newly active part of the Hungarian political system.

The nationalist politics of Slovak-speakers living in the 'old country' of Upper Hungary were therefore not at all static in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. These highly significant developments in the Slovak national movement took place just as the newly emergent Slovak American organisations began to engage in the nationalist affairs of the 'old country' from the 1890s. To a modest degree, the agitation of the Slovak American press already contributed to the decision of the SNP leadership to embrace popular political activity, rather than to continue 'carrying out nothing for the success of the people'.¹⁰⁵ For the most part, however, the transformation of Slovak nationalism in the 'old country' into a broader national movement was a process that Slovak American organisations responded to, rather than caused.

Slovak American Organisations and the National Movement in the 1890s

The value of Slovak American organisations to the development of Slovak political nationalism was not immediately clear to Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary.

¹⁰⁵ Štefánek, 'Veci Slovenské', 40/23.

Rather than acquiring the broad support of the migrant colony for their cause without controversy, Slovak nationalists in the ‘old country were confronted by a fractious set of perpetually squabbling, Slovak American leaders. The Slovak fraternal organisations were prone to internal schisms, while the polemical Slovak American press often turned its invective on the editors of rival newspapers or community leaders. To make things worse, some of the early Slovak American leaders were serial litigants. In 1892, for example, the third convention of the National Slovak Society was disrupted by the presentation of an arrest warrant for its President, Peter Rovnianek, on a libel charge being pursued by the fraternal organisation’s former minute-taker.¹⁰⁶ In 1896 the editor of New York’s *Slovák v Amerike* was arrested on the same charge for publishing a satire aimed at a ‘Magyarone’ or pro-Hungarian priest who served a Slovak parish.¹⁰⁷ The National Slovak Society took legal action against *Slovák v Amerike* in 1908, but became almost immediately embroiled in a series of legal struggles against external opponents and disaffected members that did not finally conclude until 1917.¹⁰⁸ The Catholic Union was subject to fewer legal disputes with other Slovak organisations, but was still taken to court by some its local branch members, who had been expelled from the fraternal organisation for

¹⁰⁶ Balch Institute/HSP, ‘National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)’, Box 2, *Pamätník Národný Slovenský Spolok v Spojených štátoch amerických, Vydaný z Príležitosti 25-Ročného Jubileumu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1915*. Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Národných Novín, 1915, p. 51.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Editor Marshall Arrested’, *New York Times*, 26 Sep. 1896, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Balch Institute/HSP, ‘National Slovak Society, National Records, 1915-1974. Box 2 Jubilee Book, 50th Anniversary, 2/3’, *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1940*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlač Narodných Novín, 1940, p. 36; K. Čulen (trans. D. C. Necas), *History of Slovaks in America*, St. Paul, MN: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007, p. 314-315; Balch Institute/HSP, ‘National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)’, Box 2, *Kalendárium 1918*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Národných Novín, 1918, p. 52-53.

having set up an independent and ‘schismatic’ Catholic church.¹⁰⁹ The total sum spent by Slovaks in the United States on legal cases, conducted mainly against other Slovak American organisations or personalities ran into some ‘tens of thousands’ of dollars between 1890 and 1914.¹¹⁰ Slovak nationalist historians have not looked kindly on the internal discord that affected Slovak American organisations. Konštantín Čulen judged that disputes between the major Slovak American leaders and organisations ‘hindered the progress of the Slovak cause in America’ and stemmed from ‘purely personal and petty differences’.¹¹¹ The role of personal rivalries within such a small and mutually familiar group as the Slovak American leadership cannot be discounted as a factor in these conflicts. Yet this does not explain why Slovak American life was prone to more ferocious internal disputes than the Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary that also typically possessed a small group of interconnected and ambitious leaders.

One factor that explains why intensive conflict was a distinctive feature of Slovak American community was the extensive role played by Peter Rovnianek in Slovak American life. During the 1890s Rovnianek was not only editor of the largest-circulating Slovak-language paper and the chairman of the largest Slovak fraternal organisation, but had also built an extensive business empire that relied on the Slovak migrant market in the United States. Like many leaders of migrant communities at the time, Rovnianek owned a steamship ticket company that sold passage between the German ports and the United States for his countrymen and remitted hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in saved wages to Upper

¹⁰⁹ IHRCA, Box SLK-19, Periodicals 'Za-', Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota, *Zápisnica XV. Konvencia Prvej Katolíckej Slovenskej Jednoty, od 2. do 8. júna 1912 v Cleveland, Oh.* Middletown, PA: Tlačou “Jednoty”, 1912, p. 11, p. 14, p. 16, p. 18, p. 28-29.

¹¹⁰ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 171.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Hungary.¹¹² The Slovak American entrepreneur later established his own banking firm to handle Slovak American savings and remittances, which developed close ties with Tatra Bank, one of the few Slovak-owned financial companies in Upper Hungary. Meanwhile, Rovnianek's newspaper press in Pittsburgh was the dominant publisher of Slovak-language books and other material for the United States market.¹¹³ Rovnianek was, in short, an oligarch: had he lived today, he would have likely added ownership of a television company or a sporting team to the list of concerns that served to mutually reinforce his influence within the Slovak-American community.

The multiple roles that he served within the migrant colony meant that Rovnianek's personal, business and political enemies were not easy to distinguish. For example, Rovnianek secured a resolution as chairman of the National Slovak Society in 1895 that forbade its members reading or distributing 'unfriendly newspapers' like *Slovak v Amerike* in their branch organisations (though a later convention held in 1899 found that many members in fact still subscribed to the banned newspaper under false names).¹¹⁴ After a further conflict erupted between the newspaper and the major Slovak American fraternal organisations in 1901, Rovnianek published a series of polemics accusing *Slovak v Amerike* of being subsidised by the Hungarian government in order to undermine Slovak American unity.¹¹⁵ At the same time, Rovnianek was tempted by highly speculative projects: a gold mining company that he founded collapsed in 1900, taking the investments of

¹¹² M. M. Stolárik, 'Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870-1918', (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1974), f. 120.

¹¹³ SNA, O. F. Fedor Houdek, č. šk. 2, inv. č. 48, poč. č. 111, 'Korešpondencia s Dr. Milanom Hodžou, z 18.2.1890', Milan Hodža to Fedor Houdek, Budapest, 22 Jan. 1911', 502/2; Slovak Institute, Personalities File, 'Ivan Daxner', K. Čulen, 'Storočnica Ivana Daxnera', (1960), p. 136; *Pamätník Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 62.

¹¹⁴ *Pamätník Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 55, p. 57.

¹¹⁵ *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*, 20 June 1901, p. 4.

many Slovak American investors with it.¹¹⁶ Another project to sell plots of arable land to Slovak migrants already living in the United States saw investors relocate from the big cities to rural Arkansas. Although a village of settlers known as ‘Slovaktown’ (also known as ‘Slovak’) was established in Arkansas from 1894, the scheme was considered by his detractors to be a pyramid scheme from which Rovnianek alone profited.¹¹⁷ His unscrupulous dealing extended to accepting money from a coal-mining company in 1891 in return for Rovnianek reversing his newspaper's support for a strike in Connellsville, Pennsylvania in which many Slovak workers took part.¹¹⁸ Rovnianek’s involvement in almost every facet of Slovak American life was liable to attract criticism, but these scandals ensured that outcome: the ‘Connellsville affair’ for example was the ostensible basis for the first major confrontation between the *Slovák v Amerike* newspaper and Rovnianek in 1893.¹¹⁹ When the American economy suffered an economic slump and banking crisis from 1907, Rovnianek’s banking firm collapsed alongside thousands of others - taking an estimated \$1.5 million of Slovak funds with it both in the form of ordinary Slovak migrant savings and a substantial loan provided by Tatra Bank in Upper Hungary.¹²⁰ The resulting scandal forced Rovnianek out of active participation in Slovak American organisations for good, but the struggle between his business partners, such as Anton Ambrose to retain influence in the National Slovak Society

¹¹⁶ Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 122.

¹¹⁷ The settlement of ‘Slovak’ or ‘Slovak’ still exists as a municipality in Prairie County, Arkansas, to the present day. Ibid., f. 120.

¹¹⁸ IHRCA, P150, ‘Correspondence of U. S. Slovaks with Leaders in Slovakia, 1890s-1940s’, Reel 2 of 3, Štefan Furdek to František Sasinek, Cleveland, OH, 8 Feb 1901, f. 1-4; Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 120.

¹¹⁹ *Pamätník Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 51; Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 120.

¹²⁰ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, [Pressburg] 27 Jan. 1911, p. 2; *Pamätník Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 61

dragged on throughout the First World War.¹²¹ Rovnianek's dominant position within Slovak American life combined with his own personal flaws made conflict between Slovak American organisations liable to escalate when it broke out, as happened on several occasions during the 1890s.

The second substantial reason for Slovak American discord was the issue of religion and its relationship to Slovak nationalism: a cause of friction that lasted much longer than Rovnianek's influence in Slovak American life. This topic essentially divided the leading Slovak organisations into two camps. The National Slovak Society was an essentially non-denominational organisation: while it contributed funds to church building projects within the Slovak American community, it retained a secular view of Slovak national affairs. The Catholic Union was a denominational organisation whose leadership reflected a broader distrust within the Catholic Church for secular forms of nationalism. Its newspaper *Jednota* exchanged polemics with Rovnianek's newspaper and fraternal organisation during 1892 and at several other intervals during the following decades - a conflict that an internal history of the Catholic Union blamed on the 'propagation of freethinking views' by the National Slovak Society and its unofficial organ *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny*.¹²² Disputes were also provoked by the agitation of Rovnianek and other secular Slovak nationalists against the presence of 'Magyarone' priests in

¹²¹ R. Korbaš, 'Peter Víťazoslav Rovnianek', in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v zahraničí*, Vol. 27, 2010, p. 118; AMS, Fond KSZ, č. šk. 1, inv. č. 6, por. č. 14, Paul Lovás, 'Správa z Konferencie N.S.S. konanej 8-17 9. 1913 v Milwaukee', Buffalo, NY, 21 Sep 1913, f. 1, f. 3; AMS, Fond KSZ č. šk. 15, inv. č. 115, por. č. 450, Albert Mamatey to Pavol Lovás, 'Zaslanie úradnického sľubu vernosti na podpis', Braddock PA, 27 Dec. 1913, f. 1; *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 39, p. 43; *Pamätník Národného Slovenského Spolku*, p. 61; p. 64, p. 66

¹²² Balch Institute/HSP, 'Jednota (Katolícky Kalendár, 1898-1919, incomp.)', Box 1 of 1, *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, Middletown, PA: Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota, 1916, p. 37.

Slovak American parishes.¹²³ As a society based on religious belief and denominational affiliation, the Catholic Union included a substantial number of members and some Catholic priests who supported patriotism towards the Hungarian state and were unreceptive to ideas of Slovak nationalism. While Štefan Furdek and other consciously Slovak leaders of the society marginalised ‘Magyarone’ voices within the society such as Jozef Kossalko, the organisation remained split on the issue of Slovak nationhood in a manner that did not apply to the membership of the National Slovak Society.¹²⁴ The Catholic Union was a ‘conservative’ society in its social and political outlook as Furdek himself explained in 1900; its officeholders were therefore suspicious of the secular nationalism being promoted by the likes of Rovnianek, a lapsed Catholic seminarian and his deputy Anton Ambrose, a Freemason, within the National Slovak Society.¹²⁵ The agitation of Slovak nationalists like Rovnianek against ‘Magyarone’ priests within the Slovak American community was therefore read as a broader anticlericalism. The Slovak *Sokol* movement in the United States - a mass-participation, gymnastic organisation, which was copied by many Slav groups from the German nationalist *Turnverein* society - split into separate Catholic and secular organisations in 1905 owing to the anticlerical sentiments expressed by many of its secular, nationalist members.¹²⁶ The religious conflict among Slovak leaders in the United States was not between an opposing Lutheran minority and the Catholic majority, but rather between secular nationalism and its anticlerical overtones with the denominational organisations formed by Slovak Catholic migrants.

¹²³ Alexander, ‘The Immigrant Church and Community’, f. 426.

¹²⁴ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 153.

¹²⁵ ‘Correspondence of U. S. Slovaks with Leaders in Slovakia, 1890s-1940s’, Reel 2 of 3, Furdek to Sasinek, Cleveland, OH, 11 Dec. 1900, f. 1.

¹²⁶ Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization’, f. 78.

Ideological divisions and bitter personal feuds within Slovak American life confronted the Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary as it sought to establish links with the migrant colony. In 1897, under the initiative of František Osvald, a Catholic priest active in Slovak Catholic organizations in Upper Hungary, the leadership of the Slovak National Party published an open letter to the major Slovak American societies and newspaper editors to end their internal feuding. Slovak leaders in Martin highlighted the importance of the migrant colony to the collective national cause, noting that ‘the more Slovaks there are in America, the fewer there are beneath the Tatras, the weaker our nation is at home... and the more difficult our struggle for truth and the national cause’.¹²⁷ It called upon the Slovak American leaders to cease using ‘dishonourable means and indecent ways’ to continue a quarrel that ‘harms the cause’ of Slovak national organisations in both Europe and the United States.¹²⁸ Anticipating a resolution of the conflict, the Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary further declared that ‘if you return home, to the old country - which is our fervent desire - we would welcome you... as loyal, ardent and successful fighters for the national cause’.¹²⁹

The sentiment of the Slovak nationalist leadership was shared by Slovak American leaders like Štefan Furdek, who regretted that they had been engaged ‘not in the fight of the Slovak against the Magyarone’ within the Slovak American colony, but rather ‘in a struggle of Slovak with Slovak’.¹³⁰ Editors of major Slovak American newspaper titles met in Cleveland in October 1897, where they produced a ‘Memorandum of Slovak Journalists’ that declared an end to their ‘fratricidal

¹²⁷ *Národné Noviny*, 15 May 1897, p. 1.

¹²⁸ *Idem*.

¹²⁹ *Idem*.

¹³⁰ Balch Institute/HSP, ‘Jednota (1898-1919, incomp.)’, Box 1 of 1, *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1898*, Cleveland, OH: Tlač Jednoty, 1898, p. 34.

conflict' and their willingness to begin a collective effort 'to engender only love for the nation' through the Slovak American press.¹³¹ The sentiment of unity and common purpose proved short-lived, as a mere declaration failed to resolve the underlying personal and structural causes of conflict; within months the Memorandum was dismissed by some of its key signatories, including Rovnianek, as a mere 'scrap of paper' as yet another feud erupted.¹³² The significance of the Memorandum of Slovak Journalists lay not in its assertion that Slovak leaders in the United States would cease their bickering for the national cause, but rather that it was the outcome of a direct intervention by the Slovak nationalist leadership in the old country. The Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary sought to steer the emerging Slovak American leadership in the United States towards harmonious cooperation, to lend their rapidly increasing, collective weight to the cause of Slovak nationalism at home. The Slovak National Party could not hope to end the internecine squabbling of Slovak American leaders, but it already identified in the 1890s that the prospects of Slovak nationalism depended as much on the affairs of the growing centre of Slovak national life in the United States as the condition of the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary.

The attempt of Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary to resolve the interminable conflicts in the Slovak-American community was conducted chiefly through the Slovak American press. This media was read by Slovak intellectuals in the old country and their correspondence was used in turn to convey the appeal of the SNP leadership to their Slovak American counterparts. Slovak-language newspapers in Upper Hungary and in the United States developed a distinctive, transatlantic

¹³¹ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1898*, p. 41-42.

¹³² *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, p. 44.

focus, in which affairs relevant to Slovaks ‘at home’ and ‘abroad’ were covered interchangeably on both sides of the Atlantic. The desire of Slovak migrants to receive news from the ‘old country’ had of course been a principal reason for the creation of the first Slovak American newspaper in the 1880s, but Slovak-language newspapers in Upper Hungary reciprocated that interest as the migrant colony grew in numbers and built its own institutions. The SNP’s newspaper *Národné Noviny* reported for example on an economic slump and corresponding financial crisis that hit the United States in 1893 in which Slovak migrants recovered ‘only twenty to thirty percent’ of ‘thousands [of dollars] saved’ in failed American banks.¹³³ The importance of these events to Slovaks in the old country was made clear to readers, for the newspaper explained that ‘it is universally known... that all of these Slovaks save this money for their kin’ who remained in Upper Hungary.¹³⁴ The participation of American Slovak workers in a national coal strike, that took place in 1894 and led to violent clashes between strikers and state authorities - who deployed troops to assert their control of the situation - was also followed by the Slovak press in Europe.¹³⁵ Developments within Slovak American institutions, including reports of the annual convention of the National Slovak Society were faithfully recorded in *Národné Noviny*, alongside those of Slovak student groups such as *Detvan* and *Tatran* in different parts of Austria-Hungary.¹³⁶ The idea that ‘Slovak affairs’ could extend to both sides of the Atlantic was not held as a theory, but was carried out in practice by the Slovak nationalist press.

¹³³ *Národné Noviny*, 6 Mar. 1894, p. 1.

¹³⁴ *Idem*.

¹³⁵ *Národné Noviny*, 22 May 1894, p. 1-2; 9 Aug. 1894, p. 3.

¹³⁶ *Národné Noviny*, 4 July 1895, p. 3.

Slovak political leaders and journalists were equally capable of targeting their audience through the Slovak press in Upper Hungary or in the United States from the 1890s. This characteristic of Slovak political journalism was furthered by the exchange of Slovak nationalist writers between Upper Hungary and the United States. Many significant cases demonstrate how Slovak journalists easily moved between these two centres of Slovak national life. A prominent example of this phenomenon was Ignác Gessay, one of the most prominent Slovak journalists in the United States, who originally contributed to Slovak periodicals such as *Slovenské listy* (Slovak Letters) and *Kresťan* (The Christian) as a school teacher living in Orava County.¹³⁷ After migrating to the United States in 1899, Gessay contributed articles to several major Slovak newspapers, while employed as a teacher in Olyphant, Pennsylvania.¹³⁸ His contributions brought him to the attention of Peter Rovnianek, who appointed him editor of *Slovenský Denník* (The Slovak Daily) between 1903 and 1919.¹³⁹ In 1906, the Slovak American community welcomed Anton Bielek, perhaps the most prominent journalist to migrate from Upper Hungary before the First World War. Bielek was a prominent nationalist leader in Upper Hungary and an official in Slovak organisations such as the Tatra Bank in Martin. He was also a major publisher of the Slovak press in Upper Hungary, editing the Slovak-language journal *Beseda* (Discussion) and establishing the newspaper *Katolícké Noviny* (The Catholic News) in Trnava/Nagyszombat.¹⁴⁰ Bielek migrated to the United States in the spring of 1906, where his eyewitness testimony and agitation about conditions in Upper

¹³⁷ Z. Pavelcová, 'V Spomienkach na Život a Dielo Ignáca Gessaya (1874-1928)', in Z. Pavelcová (ed.) *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 31, Martin: Matica Slovenska, 2015, p. 39.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹³⁹ Pavelcová, 'Ignáca Gessaya', p. 41; K. Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy v Amerike*, Cleveland, OH: First Catholic Slovak Union, 1970, p. 146-147.

¹⁴⁰ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 294.

Hungary was used at ‘indignation meetings’ held by Slovak American groups to protest the political repression of their nationalist countrymen in Upper Hungary.¹⁴¹ Bielek was also made editor of the *Slovák v Amerike* newspaper in New York, in which he campaigned for the creation of a new umbrella organisation to represent the political interests of the various Slovak American organisations.¹⁴² Bielek therefore served as one of a five member committee that effectively determined the terms by which the Slovak League of America was formed in 1907.¹⁴³ While Anton Bielek returned to Europe a few years later and soon passed away, his son Ivan carried on the family legacy in the United States. Ivan Bielek became editor *Národné Noviny*, the official newspaper of the National Slovak Society from 1910, served as deputy in the Slovak League of America during the wartime period and became its president in 1920.¹⁴⁴

Slovak writers did not have to move permanently to contribute to the Slovak press on both sides of the Atlantic. Ján Janček, the son of a prominent Slovak nationalist campaigner in Ružomberok/Rózsahegy/Rosenberg¹⁴⁵, Upper Hungary, contributed articles in the early 1900s to *Národné Noviny* in Martin; Milan Hodža’s *Slovenský Týždenník* in Budapest; and Rovnianek’s *Amerikánsko-Slovenské Noviny* in Pittsburgh.¹⁴⁶ Janček moved to the United States in 1904 to take up a position in Rovnianek’s newspaper empire, where he also helped to set up the *Slovenský Sokol*

¹⁴¹ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 6, inv. č. 55, porad. č. 141, Ján Švehla, ‘Správa finančná z prímov a výdavkov indigačnej schôdze odbývanej v Plzeňskom Sokole v Chicago’, Chicago, IL, 17 Feb. 1907. f. 1.

¹⁴² Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 294.

¹⁴³ H. Palkovičová, ‘Ivan Bielek a Slovenská Līga v Amerike’, in Bajanič and Dund’urová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 28, 2011, p. 10.

¹⁴⁴ United States, Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania Archives [HSWPA], Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 9, Milan Getting Sr., Professional Materials - Washington, 1920-1921. ‘Přehlad českého a slovenského tisku vo Spojených státech severoamerických: Denníky Slovenské’, f. 6; Balch Institute/HSP, *Nové Slovensko* (Pittsburgh, PA), 2: 43 (30 Sep. 1920), p. 4; *Nové Slovensko*, 2: 45 (30 Nov. 1920), p. 2, p. 16-17.

¹⁴⁵ The name of the town in Slovak, Magyar and German respectively.

¹⁴⁶ Slovak Institute, ‘Personalities File, Ján Janček, (starý a mladý)’, f. 1, f. 4.

(The Slovak Sokol) newspaper for the growing gymnastic organisation in the United States.¹⁴⁷ Citing a desire to return to his family, Janček then returned to Upper Hungary, where he campaigned on behalf of Vavro Šrobár as a SNP candidate in the 1906 Hungarian elections. He later returned to the United States during the First World War as an officer within the emigre, Czechoslovak independence movement, serving as the chief secretary of the Slovak League of America in 1918.¹⁴⁸ The ease with which Slovak intellectuals moved between the two chief centres of the Slovak press was not limited to leading scions of the Slovak national movement such as Bielek or Janček. It was an experience shared by the likes of Ján Porubský, a Slovak-speaking seminary student who contributed articles to *Národné Noviny* from 1895; one of which resulted in the trainee priest being excluded from his studies for two months by a Hungarian bishop.¹⁴⁹ Porubský emigrated to the United States in 1904, where he was ordained as a priest to serve the Slovak community in Scranton, Pennsylvania.¹⁵⁰ He set up a weekly newspaper, which was published during 1905 and 1906, and contributed to the Slovak American press until after the First World War, serving as a member of ‘The League of Slovak Journalists in the United States’ (*Združenie Slovenských Novinárov*) and as an officer in several Slovak organisations.¹⁵¹ Slovak writers were thus able to move seamlessly between the two centres of Slovak-language journalism and nationalist political affairs on either side of the Atlantic. The chief editors of the Slovak American press, such as Peter Rovnianek, were studious readers of newspapers from the old country and did not

¹⁴⁷ Slovak Institute, ‘Personalities File, Ján Janček, (starý a mladý)’, f. 4

¹⁴⁸ Idem; HSWPA, ‘Getting Family Papers’, Box 4, Folder 3, M. Getting (trans. M. P. Getting), ‘American Slovaks and the Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept During the Years 1914-1918, Part I’, [1933/trans. 1990], f. 201.

¹⁴⁹ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 12, inv. č. 102, porad. č. 356, ‘Ján Porubský: životopisný dotazník, fotografia’, Dalton, PA, July 1936, 2jd/3s, f. 1.

¹⁵⁰ Idem.

¹⁵¹ Idem; Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy*, p. 146-147.

hesitate to offer employment to writers who both demonstrated talent as well as an amenable political outlook.

The transatlantic press also developed through an exchange of content and financial support that did not involve the physical migration of Slovak writers from one side of the Atlantic to another. Slovak editors in the United States cultivated links with the Slovak national movement in Europe to secure their contributions to Slovak American journalism, as much as to pursue specific, political goals. The National Slovak Society, for example, formed a literary committee which awarded Slovak writers living in Upper Hungary with prizes and encouraged them to submit work for publication in the United States. In 1907, its committee awarded a prize of fifty Hungarian crowns to the prominent Hlasist writer Vavro Šrobár; the committee's chairman - the omnipresent Rovnianek - sent a congratulatory letter to Šrobár expressing his wish that 'your pen and ability may continue to serve Slovak literature and our nation'.¹⁵² Efforts to send content from Slovak intellectuals in Upper Hungary to the migrant colony were typically published out in the *kalendár* - an almanac consisting of a few hundred pages of religious, political and general interest articles that was produced by the chief Slovak publishers and fraternal organisations in the United States throughout this period. The first such work was published by the National Slovak Society in 1893 and was from the beginning a transatlantic document.¹⁵³ The inaugural publication contained, for example, a lengthy article from Štefan Daxner, one of the leading Slovak politicians in Upper Hungary, in

¹⁵² SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 360, poč. č. 1, Peter Rovnianek to Vavro Šrobár, Pittsburgh, PA, 14 Aug. 1907, 33/137/18.

¹⁵³ Balch Institute/HSP, 'National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1893-1905/6 (incomp.)', Box 1, *Národný Kalendár pre rímsko a grécko-katolíkov a evanjelikov na obyčajný rok 1893*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerikánsko Slovenských Novín, 1893.

which he summarised ‘Slovak affairs in the past twenty years’.¹⁵⁴ Daxner placed this nationalist struggle into a fitting context for the Slovak American readership, claiming that ‘Slovaks now grasp that an educated nation that is being politically suppressed will easily gain its freedom; the clearest example of this being the United States, an educated nation that sacrificed its blood and property to gain its freedom.’¹⁵⁵ Another almanac article in 1902, probably written by the nationalist leader Svetozvár Hurban-Vajanský, demonstrated the SNP leadership’s wish to harness the strength of Slovak American press and associations for its own political cause. It first targeted return migrants from the United States to Upper Hungary, who were urged to ‘cultivate and propagate Slovak [national] thought in your hometown’.¹⁵⁶ Return migrants were encouraged to retain their interest in the Slovak press in Upper Hungary, the writer arguing that ‘as in America a man cannot live without newspapers, truly you cannot live without them in your place of birth: unless you which to fall into darkness and servitude’.¹⁵⁷ The article called on Slovaks who remained in the United States never to ‘forget the distressing situation of our dear nation in the old country and to carry out your national duty’.¹⁵⁸ Slovak American almanacs were therefore used to convey nationalist sentiments to Slovak migrants by the leaders of the Slovak National Party, who hoped that they would return to the Upper Hungary as ‘nationally conscious’ Slovaks and therefore strengthen the Slovak national movement in the old country.

¹⁵⁴ Š. Daxner, ‘Poměry slovenské v posledných dvoch desaťročiach’, *Národný Kalendár 1893*, pp. 58-82.

¹⁵⁵ *Národný Kalendár 1893*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁶ ‘National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1893-1905/6 (incomp.), Box 1, *Národný Kalendár pre rímsko a grécko-katolíkov a evanjelikov na obyčajný rok*, 1902, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerikánsko Slovenských Novín, 1902, p. 51-52.

¹⁵⁷ *Národný Kalendár 1902*, p. 52.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

The Integration of Slovak Migrant Organisations into the National Movement

Slovak American organisations emerged as an important source of moral and financial support for the Slovak nationalist cause in Upper Hungary during the 1890s. In January 1893, the National Slovak Society convention in Pittsburgh passed a resolution ‘expressing its confidence in the Slovak National Party to manly uphold the rights of the Slovak nation’.¹⁵⁹ It denounced the Hungarian government in turn, which it held responsible for ‘the material and spiritual destruction of the Slovak districts’ of Hungary.¹⁶⁰ The National Slovak Society resolution accepted the political programme of the Slovak nationalist leadership in Hungary and vowed that the fraternal organisation ‘would also work for this [program] from abroad’.¹⁶¹ Slovak American organisations supported the nationalist movement in this period primarily through financial aid: prior to the entry of the SNP into active parliamentary politics in 1900, this chiefly consisted of support for the legal costs of nationalist leaders who were prosecuted by the Hungarian state. In 1893, the Slovak Sokol gymnastic organisation undertook one of the first initiatives to assist Hurban-Vajanský, who had been jailed for a newspaper article that was deemed to be an ‘incitement against the Magyar nationality’ - the common legal charge by which the Hungarian authorities prosecuted the leaders of nationalist parties in the state.¹⁶² The Slovak Sokol organisation collected funds from its own branches as well as affiliated Czech and other Slav branches of the gymnastic movement, sending just over fifty

¹⁵⁹ ‘Rezolúcia Národného spolku slovenského v Spojených štátoch severoamerických vyslovujúca dôveru Slovenskej národnej strane v Uhorsku v súvisе s jej politickou činnosťou’, published in *Národné Noviny*, 4 Feb 1893, in F. Bokeš, (ed.), *Dokumenty k slovenskému národnému hnutiu v rokoch 1848-1914, Vol. II: 1885-1901*. Bratislava: Slovenská Akademia Vied, 1972, p. 159.

¹⁶⁰ Idem.

¹⁶¹ Idem.

¹⁶² IHRCA, ‘Correspondence of U.S. Slovaks’, Reel 2 of 3, Ján Švehla to “Drahí Bratia”, Circular to Slovak Sokol branches, Chicago, IL, 15 Mar. 1893, f. 1.

crowns in total to assist the Slovak nationalist leader during his imprisonment.¹⁶³ In 1898, Ambrose Pietor and Matúš Dula, editors of *Národné Noviny*, were similarly prosecuted and jailed by the Hungarian authorities, on the grounds of incitement. The Slovak Sokol organisation sent a sum of 375 crowns to be distributed between the jailed national leaders and to help maintain the publications of the newspaper during their imprisonment.¹⁶⁴ The convictions of Pietor and Dula played an important role in stirring Slovak American organisations to organise a more concerted relief effort for nationalist leaders at home.¹⁶⁵ In 1899 Štefan Furdek and Matúš Jankola, a fellow officer within the Catholic Union, called for the creation of a ‘National Fund’ among Slovak organisations in the United States to support the national movement in Upper Hungary.¹⁶⁶ This was to consist of a common treasury, funded by contributions from each Slovak organisation, its programme of financial support being overseen by an executive committee representing the major Slovak American organisations and newspaper editors.¹⁶⁷ The idea was readily taken up by Rovnianek and other officers of the National Slovak Society, who organised a national fund within their own organisation from 1899, its members were taxed one cent per month towards this cause, raising an annual sum of around \$1,200 for national causes in Upper Hungary.¹⁶⁸ After a more protracted struggle within the Catholic Union, Furdek and Jankola eventually secured the support of their fraternal organisation for the National

¹⁶³ ‘Correspondence of U.S. Slovaks’, Reel 2 of 3, Ján Švehla to Pavol Mudroň, Chicago, IL, 25 Sep. 1893, f. 1.

¹⁶⁴ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 222; ‘Correspondence of U.S. Slovaks’, Reel 2 of 3, Švehla to Mudroň, Chicago, IL, 18 Dec. 1898, f. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 222.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Correspondence of U. S. Slovaks with Leaders in Slovakia, 1890s-1940s’, Reel 2 of 3, Štefan Furdek to František Sasinek, Cleveland, OH, 29 June 1899, f. 1.

¹⁶⁷ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 186.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Correspondence of U.S. Slovaks’, Reel 2 of 3, Supreme Assembly of the National Slovak Society to Pavol Mudroň, Pittsburgh, PA, 29 Aug. 1899, f. 1.

Fund, with the organisation possessing \$500 for this cause by December 1900.¹⁶⁹

The first significant use of these funds was to support the legal costs of the prosecuted Slovak newspaper editors as well as providing financial support for their families: in total, some \$1,200 was sent by Slovak organisations in the United States to Upper Hungary for this purpose alone.¹⁷⁰ This level of annual financial support would not be matched by Slovak American organisations until an unprecedented year of nationalist conflict in Upper Hungary in 1907, but Slovak organisations continued to provide funds to Slovak nationalists facing prosecution in Hungary at a much lower rate in other years. The minutes of the National Slovak Society show that it sent one hundred dollars to the Slovak National Party for this purpose in 1902 alone.¹⁷¹

Slovak fraternal organisations used the National Fund, as well as independent collections within their branch membership, to support a wider range of national projects in Upper Hungary. They regularly contributed funds to the upkeep of the *Národný Dom* (National House), a building in the centre of Martin from 1888 housing a Slovak museum, library and serving as a centre for Slovak plays and other Slovak national cultural events.¹⁷² Its upkeep and cultural activities were supported by an annual subsidy of around one hundred dollars from the National Slovak Society.¹⁷³ The wealth of Slovak American organisations played an important role in funding the construction of a similar *Národný Dom* by Slovak nationalists in Skalica,

¹⁶⁹ Furdek to Sasinek, Cleveland, OH, 11 Dec. 1900, f. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Idem.

¹⁷¹ IHRCA, Box SLK-60, (Slovak) Periodicals, VI-ZA, *Národný Slovenský Spolok, Zápisnice Deviatej Kovencie Národného Slovenského Spolku v Bayonne, NJ dňov 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 a 13 júna 1903*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou P. V. Rovnianek and Co., 1903, p. 59.

¹⁷² Čapek, *The Slovaks of Hungary*, New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906, p. 165-166.

¹⁷³ IHRCA, P150, 'Correspondence of U.S. Slovaks with Leaders in Slovakia, 1890-1914', Reel 1 of 2. Ján Stas to Andrej Halaš, Olyphant, PA, 24 Aug. 1901, f. 1.

which was opened in 1905.¹⁷⁴ Pavol Blaho, the Hlasist writer and politician based in that town, had travelled to the United States in 1893 on the invitation of Peter Rovnianek and used his long-term ties with the Slovak American community to appeal for some seventy thousand Hungarian crowns (around \$15,000) to complete the project.¹⁷⁵ Blaho wrote an open letter to the major Slovak American organisations in 1906 appealing to his countrymen to ‘provide a sacrifice for this precious Slovak national house; to show in deed your love for us’.¹⁷⁶ As the building had in fact already been constructed, Blaho was able to present his appeal as covering the ‘debts’ owed by Slovak organisations in Skalica for the *Národný Dom* rather than an investment in a speculative and highly expensive project.¹⁷⁷ Voluntary collections held within Slovak American groups and newspapers raised an undetermined sum of money for the cause, though Slovak American goodwill did not account for the entire, vast sum requested by Blaho.¹⁷⁸

Slovak American organisations also subsidised the Slovak-language press in Upper Hungary. The eighth convention of the National Slovak Society voted to spend one hundred dollars subsidising Slovak newspapers in the old country ‘to be distributed to the Slovak east’ (the counties of north-eastern Upper Hungary where the majority of Slovaks living in the United States had come from and where Slovak

¹⁷⁴ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 108, porad. č. 423, Pavol Blaho to Jozsef Čurniak, Národný slovenský spolok č. 418, Skalica to Akron, OH, May 1906, f. 2.

¹⁷⁵ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 12, inv. č. 633, poč. č. 29, Peter Rovnianek to Pavol Blaho, Pittsburgh, PA, 7 Aug. 1892, f. 1-2; Rovnianek to Blaho, New York, 10 Feb. 1893, f. 6; Rovnianek to Blaho, Pittsburgh, PA, 15 May 1893, f. 11; Rovnianek to Blaho, Pittsburgh, PA, 18 July 1898, f. 12; Rovnianek to Blaho, New York, 11 Jan. 1901, f. 20; Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 108, porad. č. 423, Blaho to Čurniak, f. 3.

¹⁷⁶ Blaho to Čurniak, f. 4.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., f. 3.

¹⁷⁸ O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 12, inv. č. 633, poč. č. 29, Rovnianek to Blaho, Pittsburgh, PA, 14 Sep. 1906, f. 27; Rovnianek to Blaho, Pittsburgh, PA, 20 Oct. 1906, f. 28; SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 52, inv. č. 1696, poč. č. 2, Ludevít Šimko, Národný slovenský spolok č. 349 ‘Svätý Ján Krstiteľ’ to Pavol Blaho, West Troy, NY, 22 July 1906, f. 1; Národný slovenský spolok č. 299 ‘Svätý Cyril a Method’ to Pavol Blaho, New York, 14 July 1906, f. 2.

nationalism had hitherto made little impact).¹⁷⁹ The National Fund was used by Slovak American leaders to support a range of newspapers from the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary - *Katolícke Noviny*, *Ludové Noviny*, *Hlas*, as well as *Národné Noviny* - that represented each of the major factions (Catholic; Hlasist; Slovak National Party leadership) within the Slovak national movement.¹⁸⁰ Slovak American organisations therefore supported the agenda of Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary. Events or requests for aid originated in Upper Hungary and Slovak migrants determined whether and how to respond to them. During the 1890s, Slovak American leaders organised most of their financial support through correspondence with the traditional SNP leadership in Martin, rather than directly communicating with the emerging Catholic and Hlasist factions of the national movement respectively.

Signs of discontent emerged in the context of this subordinate relationship between Slovak American organisations and the homeland national movement from 1900. A private letter from Štefan Furdek, chairman of the Catholic Union to his chief European correspondent František Sasinek cited this tension as a chief reason as to why his fraternal society had been reluctant to support the National Fund to support nationalist activity at home. Furdek revealed that the likes of Matúš Jankola and other officers of the Catholic Union ‘did not want to give much to the Martin group (*Martinčania*)’ but rather called for ‘the creation of a newspaper for the eastern districts’ of Upper Hungary with their organisation’s funds instead.¹⁸¹ The proposal to publish a newspaper in the eastern districts was defeated in favour of the

¹⁷⁹ *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu*, p. 31.

¹⁸⁰ Slovak Institute, ‘Personalities File, P. V. Rovnianek, 1867-1933’, Rovnianek to Furdek, Pittsburgh, PA, 30 Jan. 1901, f. 1.

¹⁸¹ IHRCA, ‘Correspondence of U.S. Slovaks, Furdek to Sasinek, Cleveland, OH, 11 Dec. 1900, f. 1.

collective effort of a Slovak American national fund, but shows how Slovak American fraternal officers began to question the effectiveness of the traditional SNP leadership in the 'old country'. It is worth noting that the specific cause of this dissent was the Slovak nationalist cause in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary. The National Slovak Society was already subsidising the distribution of Slovak-language newspapers to these counties; their counterparts in the Catholic Union like Jankola clearly sought to go a step further by publishing their own newspaper using Slovak American funds. Most Slovak migrants had originated from eastern Upper Hungary and the emerging nationalist leadership in the United States was frustrated at the failure of the SNP leadership to agitate in their birthplaces. In truth, the concept of the 'old country' among Slovak American leaders was somewhat narrower in a geographical sense than the whole of Upper Hungary.

From 1903, this distinctly Slovak American agenda within the national movement was furthered by the executive committee of the National Slovak Society, which began awarding stipends from its National Fund directly to Slovak writers and students, rather than sending the money to Martin for distribution by the SNP leadership. The committee also established that Slovak students and writers, as well as Slovak nationalist projects based in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary would be given priority support.¹⁸² These decisions mark the tentative beginning of an autonomous, Slovak American role developing within the national movement. As most migrants came from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary and had little prior experience of the Slovak nationalist leadership – primarily based in the central counties - the officeholders and newspaper editors that emerged within Slovak

¹⁸² L. Tajták, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Národné Hnutie do Rozpadu Monarchie', in Bajaník and Dund'urová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 25, 2008, p. 27.

American institutions voiced a different set of priorities to the traditional Slovak nationalist leadership in Martin. While they continued to support nationalist leaders in their criminal trials and cultural projects, Slovak leaders in the United States grew exasperated at the failure of homeland nationalists to agitate for Slovak nationhood in the birthplaces of most migrants in eastern Upper Hungary. Thus, while the chief causes of dissent with the SNP's political strategy among Slovak nationalists living in Upper Hungary were ideological - from the Hlasist and clerical factions respectively - the origins of Slovak American discontent stemmed from the distinct, regional priorities of these migrant organisations. The potentially negative consequences of this tension within the Slovak national movement should not however be exaggerated. There was not a decisive break between Slovak American support for the traditional nationalist leadership and their independent support of nationalist projects in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary. Rather than merely underwriting the agenda of nationalist leaders in Upper Hungary, however, the leaders of Slovak American organisations made choices between competing national projects and asserted their own regional priorities when doing so. Slovak American leaders took the idea of Slovak nationhood, that most migrants had only become attached to while living in the United States, and sought to introduce it to their counties of birth in eastern Upper Hungary as an almost entirely novel political concept.

The unprecedented scale of Slovak nationalist political campaigns before the First World War was made possible by the funds provided by the major Slovak American fraternal organisations. These efforts were marked by a significant Slovak nationalist breakthrough in the parliamentary elections of 1906, which placed the

‘Slovak Question’ on the agenda of the incoming Hungarian government. The Slovak National Party had been roused from its decades of electoral passivity and fielded candidates at the Hungarian elections in 1901; following a subdued campaign during elections in 1905, in which the party won a single seat in Upper Hungary, a far more vigorous campaign was undertaken for the next year’s polls.¹⁸³ The Slovak nationalist manifesto called for the Hungarian state to fully implement the Nationalities Law of 1868, in order to establish Slovak language rights in county administration and schools.¹⁸⁴ The Slovak National Party leader Pavol Mudroň upheld the legitimacy of the Nationalities Law in campaign speeches that praised the 1868 act for having ‘clearly recognised all the nationalities of our Hungarian land as equals’.¹⁸⁵

Electoral reform emerged as a major cause for both the Slovak national movement and in Hungarian politics more broadly before the First World War. The outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1905, which led in that autumn to the Tsar granting a new constitution, stimulated massive public demonstrations in favour of liberal reforms in Austria-Hungary. During September and October 1905 more than 100,000 protesters took part in marches in Budapest in favour of universal suffrage.¹⁸⁶ A public meeting of four thousand citizens was held in the Upper Hungarian city of Pressburg on 27 August, at which both Slovak social democratic activists and members of the Slovak nationalists like Milan Hodža discussed the impact of the Russian Revolution. The assembly passed a resolution calling for

¹⁸³ J. Bartl et. al., (trans. D. P. Daniel), *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2002, p. 115.

¹⁸⁴ O. V. Johnson, ‘Losing Faith: The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle, 1906-1914’, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*; 22 (Jan. 1998), p. 294.

¹⁸⁵ *Jednota*, 22 Feb. 1905, p. 4.

¹⁸⁶ A. Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848-1914*, Washington D. C.: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2000, p. 292.

universal suffrage and ‘political and national equality’ in Hungary.¹⁸⁷ As the events in Russia destabilised public order in Austria-Hungary, the terms for a renewed, ten-year settlement of constitutional rights between the two autonomous halves of the state had to be ratified by the King and both parliaments.¹⁸⁸ As a means to coerce the opposition majority within the Hungarian Parliament to drop their demand for the creation of a separate Hungarian army as part of this settlement, the Hungarian Interior Minister József Kristóffy tabled a bill in Hungarian Parliament providing universal male suffrage in early 1906 with the Emperor’s support.¹⁸⁹ While a similar measure was passed in the Austrian half of the monarchy, taking effect from 1907, royal support for universal suffrage in Hungary was chiefly used as a threat to undermine parliamentary opposition in Budapest; the bill was dropped in exchange for the retention of a common Austro-Hungarian army later in 1906.¹⁹⁰

In the context of this constitutional crisis within the larger empire and widespread public unrest, universal suffrage gained significant momentum as a political issue in Hungary. The existing voting system of Hungary was extensively qualified in terms of age, levels of taxation paid and education and had not been reformed since the 1870s; as a result it is estimated that by 1900 just 6% of Hungarian adult males possessed the vote.¹⁹¹ Slovak nationalists called for the introduction of ‘universal [male] suffrage’ in Hungary and the secret ballots to limit

¹⁸⁷ P. C. van Duin, *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, p. 96.

¹⁸⁸ L. Péter, (ed. M. Lojkó), *Hungary’s Long Nineteenth Century: Constitutional and Democratic Traditions in a European Perspective - Collected Studies*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, p. 227-228.

¹⁸⁹ van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 34

¹⁹⁰ T. Zsuppán, ‘The Hungarian Political Scene, 1908-1918’, in M. Cornwall (ed.), *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary: Essays in Political and Military History*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990, p. 64; J. King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 133.

¹⁹¹ van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 38; B. Cartledge, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary*, London: Timewell Press, 2006, p. 6.

intimidation and bribery of the electorate.¹⁹² The twin slogans of ‘for our Slovak language’ and ‘for universal suffrage’ were prominent features of the Slovak nationalist electoral campaign.¹⁹³ Slovak nationalists argued for the introduction of universal suffrage in Hungary at least partly on the grounds of civic responsibility. The SNP chairman Pavol Mudroň declared that ‘all those who pay either a tax in money or a tax in blood should have the right to vote’.¹⁹⁴ Mudroň argued that as all male citizens could be conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian army and could ‘fall in war for [the defence of] the homeland’, this service earned them the right to fully participate in the Hungarian political system.¹⁹⁵ The commentary of a Slovak Catholic newspaper by contrast clearly linked the extension of voting rights to every male citizen in Hungary and the attainment of nationality rights, declaring that the predominantly Magyar political class in Hungary ‘knows that universal and secret voting rights would bolster our representation [of Slovak and other minority nationalities in Hungary] in every respect and that [their] Chauvinism would then be buried for good’.¹⁹⁶ Mudroň similarly labelled universal and secret voting rights in Hungary as ‘the most important political question’ in Hungary, arguing that the reform would allow Slovak-speaking voters ‘to resolve many of our current grievances in the future’ by exerting greater influence over the administration of

¹⁹² The manifesto of the Slovak National Party was broadly set out by the party leader, Pavol Mudroň, in a campaign speech in the village of Sučany in Upper Hungary, which was transcribed and published in *Jednota*, 22 Feb. 1905, p. 4-5; The implicit exclusion of women from demands for ‘universal suffrage’ made by the Slovak National Party leadership is discussed in L. Kobová, ‘The Contexts of National and Gender Belonging: The History of Female Suffrage in Slovakia’, in B. Rodríguez-Ruiz and R. Rubio-Marín (eds.), *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe: Voting to Become Citizens*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2012, p. 227-230.

¹⁹³ The slogans, in Slovak, were ‘za tú našu slovenčinu’ and ‘za všeobecné volebné právo’ respectively. Tajták, ‘Americkí Slováci’, p. 27.

¹⁹⁴ *Jednota*, 22 Feb. 1905, p. 5.

¹⁹⁵ *Idem*.

¹⁹⁶ *Ludové Noviny*, 25 May 1907, p. 1.

Hungary.¹⁹⁷ This calculation was shared by the Serb and Romanian minority nationalist parties in Hungary, with which Slovak nationalists set out a common nationalities manifesto for the 1906 campaign calling for the adoption of universal suffrage.¹⁹⁸ The goal of universal suffrage in Hungary was taken up by Slovak nationalists due to their confident belief that the reform would significantly increase their representation within the Hungarian Parliament. As Alice Freifeld has pointed out, agitation for universal suffrage also allowed Slovak and other minority nationalist parties to portray themselves as ‘potential players’ in a reformed Hungarian political system to the public in Upper Hungary.¹⁹⁹ While Slovak and other minority nationalist parties played a marginal role in Hungarian politics after 1867, universal suffrage allowed their leaders and activists to explain their lack of influence as the outcome of an unjust electoral system in which only a fraction of the general population had the vote.²⁰⁰ Voting reform therefore served the interests of the Slovak nationalist leadership as both a cause for popular agitation in Upper Hungary and as a goal that they believed would further the cause of Slovak national rights in Hungary.

The subsequent Slovak nationalist election campaign of 1906 took the form of a co-ordinated and well-resourced effort, conducted by Slovak leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. The strategy for the Slovak nationalist campaign for the 1906 election campaign in Hungary was led by a working group, formed of the Slovak National Party leadership in Martin as well as the ‘Slovak People’s Party’ (*Slovenská*

¹⁹⁷ SNA, O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 206, poč. č. 81, ‘Zápisnica ľudového zhromaždenia voličov a občanov Sučianskeho volebného okresu zo dňa 20. marca 1910 v Martine’, Martin, 20 Mar. 1910, 166/19.

¹⁹⁸ Johnson, ‘The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle’, p. 294.

¹⁹⁹ Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd*, p. 294.

²⁰⁰ Idem.

Ludová Strana), a new political party that had been founded in December 1905.²⁰¹ The People's Party was a loose coalition of prominent Slovak Catholic politicians such as Ferdiš Juriga, Andrej Hlinka and the sole Slovak parliamentarian for Upper Hungary, František Skyčák, with the leading members of the *Hlasist* circle of liberal Slovak nationalists, including Milan Hodža, Pavol Blaho and Vavro Šrobár.²⁰² The Slovak People's Party put up its own candidates for election in districts that were left uncontested by the Slovak National Party, with the People's Party accounting for fourteen of the nineteen Slovak nationalist candidates that stood for election in Upper Hungary in 1906.²⁰³ This was an unprecedented number of Slovak nationalist candidates, in a campaign that was conducted across a much wider expanse of Upper Hungary. In addition to the Slovak National Party's activity, focused on its traditional base of support in the central counties of Upper Hungary, the new Slovak People's Party campaigned throughout the northern and western counties of Upper Hungary.²⁰⁴ A Slovak nationalist manifesto reflecting the importance of the Catholic Church, calling for greater state support for religious education and institutions was used by Ferdiš Juriga, a practising priest, to win a seat for the People's Party on the outskirts of the city of Pressburg; while at the same time the religiously liberal, Agrarian-orientated politics of Pavol Blaho secured his own election in the town of Skalica.²⁰⁵ Both the Catholic, clerical and liberal, *Hlasist* currents within Slovak nationalism therefore achieved meaningful success in the 1906 elections, with the western counties of Upper Hungary surrounding the city of Pressburg becoming a

²⁰¹ Balch Institute/HSP, 'National Slovak Society in the USA, Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)', Box 2, *Kalendárium 1907*, Tlačou Amerikánsko Slovenských Novín, 1907, p. 264; Bartl, *Slovak History*, p. 115.

²⁰² *Kalendárium 1907*, p. 264; Bartl, *Slovak History*, p. 115.

²⁰³ Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', p. 295.

²⁰⁴ *Kalendárium 1907*, p. 262, p. 264.

²⁰⁵ Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', p. 295.

key centre of activity for these emerging factions in the final years before the First World War.

Slovak nationalists also conducted an election campaign in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary for the first time, in an effort that reflected the growing influence of Slovak American organisations within the national movement. In January 1906, the Hlasist politician Milan Hodža conducted hustings throughout Šariš County on behalf of Ivan Pivko, a member of the Slovak National Party who stood for election in the district of Giraltovce in Šariš County.²⁰⁶ Following an initial campaign in January, Pivko was arrested by the local Hungarian police and subsequently ‘banished from the county of Šariš for ten years’.²⁰⁷ A new Slovak nationalist candidate stood for election in his place, but the banker Ľudovít Medvecký proved unable to ‘tear down this bulwark of Magyar power’ in Upper Hungary and lost the May 1906 ballot.²⁰⁸ The failure of Slovak nationalists to achieve electoral success in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary was unsurprising. Stanislav Klíma, a prominent Czech writer on Slovak affairs, observed in 1907 that ‘the Slovak East has fallen so far behind the awakened, Slovak West in the national respect, that there may be in truth very little to connect them with the Slovak West’.²⁰⁹ As this study has shown, however, Slovak American leaders took a special interest in seeking to overcome the lack of ‘national consciousness’ among Slovak-speakers residing in the districts from which they themselves had come.²¹⁰ The Slovak nationalist campaign in Šariš County was consequently funded by a ‘Central

²⁰⁶ S. Klíma, ‘Ruskoslovenská hranice na východě Slovenska’, *Slovanský přehled*, Vol. IX, Prague: F. Šimáček, 1907, p. 121.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121; Tajták, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Národné Hnutie’, p. 27.

²⁰⁸ Klíma, ‘Ruskoslovenská hranice’, p. 121.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²¹⁰ Tajták, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Národné Hnutie’, p. 27.

Slovak National Committee' formed in New York in October 1905, which directed funds from Slovaks in the United States to this cause.²¹¹ Slovak American funds were also used to distribute Slovak language newspapers in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary, with the aim of disseminating the idea of Slovak nationhood among the readership.²¹² These efforts had some modest effects. Stanislav Klíma observed that the circulation of the *Slovenský týždenník* (The Slovak Weekly), the Slovak-language newspaper published by Milan Hodža from Budapest, had increased to around 200 copies in the eastern counties of Slovakia, with other Slovak newspapers also increasing in circulation.²¹³

The extension of Slovak nationalist agitation into the eastern counties of Upper Hungary was a notable development of Slovak nationalism in the years before the First World War. This campaign stemmed from the ambitions of Slovak American leaders and the financial aid of their organisations, which through their extensive, transatlantic links with Slovak nationalist leaders at home like Hodža, Pivko and Medvecký was transformed into political agitation in their former places of birth. These efforts did not deliver any notable electoral success for Slovak nationalists in the eastern counties before the outbreak of the First World War; indeed, even Klíma's sympathetic account of the Slovak national cause described their efforts as showing only 'that there is still light shining in this dark, Slovak Africa'.²¹⁴ The eastern counties of Upper Hungary resembled an unknown, colonial space to Slovak nationalists even in 1918, as they attempted to implement the idea of Slovak nationhood within their newly designated national homeland of 'Slovakia'. In

²¹¹ Špiesz and Čaplovič, *Illustrated Slovak History*, p. 162.

²¹² Slovak Institute, 'Personalities File, A. S. Ambrose, 1867-1941', A. Š. Ambrose, 'Pravda zvíťazila', (1923), f. 1.

²¹³ Klíma, 'Ruskoslovenská hranice', p. 120-121.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

this sense, eastern Slovakia closely resembled its neighbouring territory of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which as Geoffrey Brown has demonstrated was also widely imagined by Czech (and Slovak) nationalists in interwar Czechoslovakia as being a colonial territory resembled ‘darkest Africa’.²¹⁵ The Czech writer Stanislav Klíma pointed to the role of Slovak-speaking migrants in spreading a Slovak-language press and the modest gains of Slovak nationalism in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary before the First World War. His account described the United States as ‘a school of consciousness for the local people’ and a place from which ‘every “Amerikán” - a Slovak from America - returns as a nationally awakened person’.²¹⁶ Through return migration and the activism of wealthy Slovak migrant organisations, the idea of Slovak nationhood was transplanted to the eastern counties of Upper Hungary on the eve of the First World War. The limited degree of Slovak ‘national consciousness’ that existed in this corner of Hungary before 1918 was in large part consciously generated by migrants, who had become attached to the idea while living in the United States, and sought to demonstrate its value to their kin in their places of birth.

The financial aid given by Slovak American organisations for nationalist activities in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary did not starve Slovak nationalist candidates standing in more favourable election districts elsewhere of funding. The immense fundraising efforts of Slovak American organisations made it possible for Slovak nationalists to campaign across Upper Hungary for the first time. Slovak America aid was distributed through the ‘Central Slovak National Committee’, a body that represented thirteen fraternal societies and nine Slovak American

²¹⁵ G. Brown, ‘The Czechoslovak Orient: Carpathian Ruthenia as an Imagined Colonial Space’, (Victoria University of Wellington, PhD Thesis, 2016), f. 85-92.

²¹⁶ Klíma, ‘Ruskoslovenská hranice’, p. 120.

newspapers.²¹⁷ The Central Committee's stated goal was 'to morally and financially support our brother Slovaks in Hungary in their struggle for universal suffrage' and was chaired by Štefan Furdek, chairman of the Catholic Union fraternal organisation.²¹⁸ Furdek set out the purpose of this struggle in an editorial in the Catholic Union's newspaper *Jednota*, arguing that:

'Universal and secret voting rights', means 'secret elections' as we have them in America. Kossuth, Bánffy, Apponyi [leading politicians in Hungary] all fear that kind of election like the Devil fears holy water. If there were a secret ballot in which everyone had a vote, Slovaks would attain their rights.²¹⁹

Slovak organisations in the United States sent some 70,000 Austro-Hungarian crowns (around \$15,000 or £3000) to support the nationalist election campaign in 1906.²²⁰ This sum far surpassed the annual level of Slovak American support for Slovak national causes and political activity in Upper Hungary, which distributed a few thousand dollars annually.²²¹ This transatlantic Slovak campaign secured unprecedented success at the 1906 Hungarian elections, in which the SNP and People's Party won a combined total of seven seats.²²² This result was hailed by Slovak American leaders as a decisive breakthrough for the cause of Slovak nationalism in Hungary.²²³ Štefan Furdek's *Jednota* declared that 'the situation is now dawning in Slovakia [...] in which it will no longer be possible to prevent the

²¹⁷ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 24.

²¹⁸ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 272.

²¹⁹ *Jednota*, 4 Oct. 1905, p. 4.

²²⁰ K. Čulen, 'Americkí Slováci v národnom živote slovenskom do roku 1914', in M. Šprinc (ed.), *Slovenská Líga v Amerike: Štyridsatročná*, Scranton, PA: Obrana Press, 1947, p. 13.

²²¹ 'Correspondence of U. S. Slovaks', Correspondence of Supreme Assembly of the National Slovak Society to Pavol Mudroň, Pittsburgh, PA, 29 Aug. 1899, f. 1; Furdek to Sasinek, Cleveland, OH, 11 Dec. 1900, f. 1.

²²² 'The Non-Magyar Races of Hungary', *The Times*, 28 Nov. 1906, p. 5.

²²³ Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 273.

awakening of our people'.²²⁴ The financial resources of the Slovak migrant community were used to support the nationalist cause in the 'old country', while the strategic concern of Slovak American leaders to spread nationalist agitation into the eastern counties of Upper Hungary expanded the geographical reach of Slovak nationalist campaigns.

Slovak Nationalism in the aftermath of the 1906 Hungarian election

The Slovak nationalist breakthrough at the 1906 Hungarian election formed part of a much wider political shift that destabilised social and political conditions in Upper Hungary. On the one hand, the cause of the minority nationalist parties in Hungary was bolstered by their unprecedented degree of political representation in Budapest. The seven Slovak nationalist deputies were joined by eighteen Serbian and Romanian nationalists, who collectively formed a 'Nationalities Party' within the Hungarian Parliament.²²⁵ The election of 1906 had also resulted however in a sweeping victory for a new governing coalition. This consisted of the National Constitution Party as well as the Party of Independence. The coalition's gains came chiefly at the expense of the Hungarian Liberals, who after decades of political hegemony in Hungary were routed and temporarily dissolved as a political party.²²⁶ The National Constitution and Independence parties won more than three hundred of the 413 seats for the Lower House of Parliament across Hungary as a whole;

²²⁴ *Jednota*, 10 Oct. 1906, p. 4.

²²⁵ 'The Non-Magyar Races of Hungary', *The Times*, 28 Nov. 1906, p. 5.

²²⁶ 'The Hungarian Settlement', *The Times*, 11 Apr. 1906, p. 5; 'Austro-Hungarian Politics', *The Times*, 21 May 1906, p. 5; Bartl, *Slovak History*, p. 116.

including fifty-five - a clear majority - of the seats in Upper Hungary.²²⁷ When the two parties further joined with the Hungarian People's Party to form the governing coalition of Hungary, the new administration held more than 85% of the seats in the lower chamber of Parliament.²²⁸ As Owen Johnson has convincingly argued, the conflicting narratives presented by both the breakthrough success of the minority nationalities as well as the overall election victory of the governing coalition parties intensified political unrest between the Slovak nationalist movement and the Hungarian authorities.²²⁹ Both the minority nationalist opposition and the new administration led by Sándor Wekerle viewed the outcome of the 1906 election as a mandate for their divergent solutions for the nationalities' question in Hungary. In this conflict, the governing Hungarian parties possessed both the power of state coercion and a massive parliamentary majority: which were used in turn both to repress minority nationalist agitators and to offer a form of marginal political accommodation to the minority national movements within the Hungarian state.

The Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary faced an intensifying degree of political persecution under the Wekerle administration from 1906. The legal device of causing 'incitement against the Magyar nationality' was used with an increased frequency to try Slovak nationalist leaders in the Hungarian courts. In November 1906, the Slovak People's Party delegate Ferdiš Juriga was charged on those grounds for the content of two newspaper articles published during his

²²⁷ A. Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918*, London: Longman, 1989, p. 218.

²²⁸ The Hungarian People's Party won thirty-three seats; eighteen of which were won in Upper Hungary, with the area remaining its strongest base of political support. Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', p. 295.

²²⁹ *Idem*.

successful election campaign.²³⁰ František Jehlička, an elected counterpart of Juriga within the Slovak People's Party and a practising Catholic priest, was charged with incitement and resigned his seat in the Hungarian Parliament; when the vacant seat was won by Milan Ivanka, the Slovak nationalist candidate at a by-election in 1907, Ivanka was also charged by the Hungarian authorities on the basis of 'incitement' within the contents of his campaign speeches, was jailed for one year and fined 1200 crowns in August 1908.²³¹ In March 1907 the publisher of *Slovenský týždenník* was sentenced to a year's imprisonment and fined for the publication of four articles that were censured for 'inciting hatred towards Magyars' and another for 'inciting class hatred' in Hungary.²³² The contents of *Ludové Noviny* in Skalica were also targeted by the Hungarian courts. Its publisher Jozef Vanek was jailed for six months in 1908 for the contribution of two incriminating articles, while members of staff received jail sentences of a year or more for publishing the offending material.²³³ Some voters were also prosecuted by the local authorities in Upper Hungary for having created 'disorder' during the 1906 election: in one trial from the county of Orava, eleven Slovaks were jailed after voting for the successful nationalist candidate, František Skyčák.²³⁴ While such prosecutions were not uncommon in Hungary, and had been conducted against Romanian and Serb nationalists in Hungary over previous decades, R. W. Seton-Watson's analysis shows that prosecutions against Slovak nationalists achieved a new level of ferocity under the Wekerle administration: while 577 prosecutions had been conducted against Romanian nationalists over the two

²³⁰ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 196.

²³¹ *Idem*.

²³² The transcripts of the case were published in *Jednota*, 24 Apr. 1907, p. 4.

²³³ *Ludové Noviny*, 25 Feb. 1907, p. 1; *Ludové Noviny*, 27 Nov. 1908, p. 2.

²³⁴ *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Aug. 1907, p. 2.

previous decades, almost the same total - 560 - were carried out against Slovaks between 1906 and 1908 alone.²³⁵

The most significant incident during this period of intensified Hungarian state action was the 'Černová Massacre' or 'Černová Tragedy' that took place in October 1907. This incident held its roots in a contentious parliamentary election held in the town of Ružomberok in Upper Hungary in 1906. In the broader climate of legal repression, the local Hungarian authorities placed on trial and convicted the Slovak nationalist election candidate Vavro Šrobár for having committed 'anti-Magyar instigation' during his unsuccessful campaign.²³⁶ The authorities also convicted the local priest politician Andrej Hlinka, who had been a prominent support of Šrobár's campaign and had also agitated against the municipal authorities in the town - contributing to Slovak parties gaining control of the town council for the first time.²³⁷ Hlinka was at the same time suspended from his post as a local parish priest, on a trumped-up charge of simony brought forward by the local Hungarian bishop Sándor Párvy.²³⁸ Tensions between the Slovak-speaking residents of the town and the Hungarian authorities were then exacerbated by the consecration of a new church in the neighbouring village of Černová where the nationalist priest Hlinka had been born.²³⁹ Hlinka had organised much of the local fundraising as its parish priest and many Slovak parishioners evidently expected that Hlinka would consecrate the new church.²⁴⁰ The Hungarian secular authorities and the local bishop however scheduled the consecration ceremony for October 1907, when Hlinka was still suspended from

²³⁵ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 309, p. 394.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 332, p. 335.

²³⁸ 'Fatal Rioting in Hungary', *The Times*, 29 Oct. 1907, p. 5; SNA, O. F. Andrej Hlinka, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 796, poč. č. 10, Andrej Hlinka to Vavro Šrobár, Segedín [Szeged], 19 Nov. 1908, f. 3; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 334.

²³⁹ *Ludové Noviny*, 1 Nov. 1907, p. 2.

²⁴⁰ *Idem*; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 339.

his post and was engaged in a lecture tour of Bohemia and Moravia to present his defence against the charges.²⁴¹ Calls by parishioners to delay the consecration of the church were denied and Hlinka's place was taken by a Magyar-speaking priest.²⁴² On 27 October 1907, the sheriff of Ružomberok arrived to mark the ceremony along with Church officials. Seton-Watson's description of what then took place - reported from second-hand accounts a few years later - provides a useful depiction of events though the specific details of what happened remain contested. He describes how:

At the entrance of the village of Csernova [sic], in the long narrow street, a crowd of several hundred Slovak peasants had assembled. A solid phalanx blocked the way, the cortege was greeted with cries of 'Turn back', 'We don't want you,' and a spokesman came forward from the crowd and begged the *szolgabiro* [sheriff] to desist from the attempt to consecrate the church. The *szolgabiro* ordered his coachman to force a passage through the crowd, and when the latter attempted to obey, a number of young fellows seized the horses' heads and tried to turn the carriage back in the direction from which it came. At this moment stones must have been thrown from the back of the crowd; for when all was over, it was discovered that, though no one else in the party had been hurt, one of the gendarmes had received a slight injury in the face. Fortunately, this could speedily be remedied by the application of some English sticking-plaster, and he was then doubtless free to assist his comrades to remove the dead and dying. For without any preliminary warning to the crowd to disperse, the gendarmes began to fire upon the peasants.²⁴³

As in many such incidents, the question of whether a specific order to fire on the crowd was given and by whom is contested. What is beyond doubt, however, is that a first shot was fired and was followed by a concerted volley by the gendarmes on

²⁴¹ 'The Nationality Question in Hungary', *The Times*, 5 Nov. 1907, p. 5; J. Baer, *A Life Dedicated to the Republic: Vavro Šrobár's Czechoslovakism*, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2014, p. 39.

²⁴² R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 340-341; A. M., Maxwell, 'Choosing Slovakia 1795-1914: Slavic Hungary, the Czech Language and Slovak Nationalism'. (University of Wisconsin-Madison, PhD Thesis, 2003), f. 73.

²⁴³ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 341-342.

the crowd.²⁴⁴ In the consequent dispersal of the crowd with gunfire, some fifteen Slovak civilians were killed, with as many as a hundred more injured.²⁴⁵

While a violent and bloody incident, the Černová Massacre gained additional notoriety due to the response of the Hungarian authorities. At a stormy session of the Hungarian Parliament a week after the incident, the Hungarian Minister of the Interior Count Andrassy declared that the stance of the villagers over the consecration ceremony represented ‘an offence against all order in the State and in the Church’.²⁴⁶ The gendarmes who had been present at Černová were cleared of wrongdoing following a court martial.²⁴⁷ In contrast, some fifty-nine villagers were brought to trial by the Ružomberok authorities for their alleged role in the disorder. Forty of whom, including the sister of Andrej Hlinka, received prison sentences.²⁴⁸ The fate of Hlinka was distinct from the prosecution of the villagers; not having been present at the disorder, he was arrested upon his return to Hungary in late November 1907 and confined in Szeged prison to serve the sentence that he had received for his role in agitating for Šrobár’s election.²⁴⁹ While imprisoned, Hlinka was sentenced to a further eighteen months imprisonment for articles that he had published in *Ludové Noviny*, so that the nationalist priest was not released from Szeged until January 1910.²⁵⁰ The legal and clerical prosecution of Hlinka was bound together with the events and aftermath of the ‘Černová Massacre’ to form a compelling narrative of

²⁴⁴ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 342.

²⁴⁵ R. Holec, ‘The Černová Tragedy and the Origin of Czechoslovakia in the Changes of Historical Memory’, in D. Kováč (ed.), *Slovak Contributions to the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000, p. 9; *Ludové Noviny*, 8 Nov. 1907, p. 1.

²⁴⁶ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 344; ‘The Fatal Rioting at Csernova’, *The Times*, 1 Nov. 1907, p. 5;

²⁴⁷ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 347.

²⁴⁸ *Ludové Noviny*, 20 Mar. 1908, p. 3; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 347.

²⁴⁹ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 335.

²⁵⁰ ‘Hungarian Justice: Treatment of Non-Magyars’, *The Times*, 5 May 1908, p. 5; ‘M. Polonyi’s Libel Action’, *The Times*, 6 May 1908, p. 7.

national persecution of Slovaks by the Wekerle regime in Hungary. The episode highlighted the Slovak nationalist struggle to an international audience through the works of the travelling Scottish scholar R. W. Seton-Watson and the Norwegian journalist Björnsterne Björnson. Björnson, a Nobel Laureate, wrote articles in the press highlighting the incident, while Seton-Watson compiled a monograph study of the Slovak and other minority nationalities in Hungary as a correspondent for *The Spectator* magazine in London.²⁵¹ The events were also publicised by Henry Wickham Steed, as Vienna correspondent for *The Times*, where he provided an ongoing account of both the incident at Černová and the response of the Hungarian authorities.²⁵² Its editorial on 1 November 1907 declared that ‘such treatment of minorities does not make for peace among the nationalities which by geographical necessity are forced to live under one Government. The ‘Magyar State Idea’ is being pressed in a manner which makes life scarcely worth living for the non-Magyar population of Hungary’.²⁵³ Wickham Steed’s own judgment of the nationalities question in Hungary situation was blunter still: ‘some Magyars of my acquaintance’, he wrote, ‘formulate the question even more simply – “either we must crush the non-Magyars or they will crush us”’. This standpoint is comprehensible. It reduces the non-Magyar question to a pure trial of strength.’²⁵⁴ Through these commentaries, the

²⁵¹ On the activities of Björnson see *Jednota*, 2 Oct. 1907, p. 4; *Jednota*, 26 Oct. 1908, p. 2; S. J., Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*, New York: St Martin’s Press, 1995, p. 146; for Seton-Watson see R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, London: Archibald and Constable, 1908; C. and H. Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, p. 41; p. 52.

²⁵² ‘Fatal Rioting In Hungary’, *The Times*, 29 Oct. 1907, p. 5; ‘The Fatal Rioting At Csernova’, *The Times*, 1 Nov. 1907, p. 5; ‘Austro-Hungarian Recriminations’, *The Times*, 1 Nov. 1907, p. 5; ‘The Nationality Question In Hungary’, *The Times*, 5 Nov. 1907, p. 5; ‘Austria-Hungary’, *The Times*, 9 Nov. 1907, p. 5; ‘Hungary And The English Press’, *The Times*, 7 Jan. 1908, p. 3; ‘Latest News’, *The Times*, 12 Mar. 1908, p. 9; ‘Hungarian Justice: Treatment of Non-Magyars’, *The Times*, 5 May 1908, p. 5.

²⁵³ ‘The Hungarian Riots’, *The Times*, 1 Nov. 1907, p. 9.

²⁵⁴ ‘Hungary and the English Press’, *The Times*, 7 Jan. 1908, p. 3.

Černová Massacre raised the nationalities question within Hungary and the cause of the Slovak nationalists to the attention of an international audience.

The heightened legal repression of Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary following the elections of 1906 was greeted with outrage by the nationalist leadership of Slovak American organisations. The outcome of the Ružomberok trial involving Vavro Šrobár and Andrej Hlinka also provoked fury among Slovaks living in the United States. Slovak American newspapers published letters received from their compatriots living in Ružomberok that painted, as one such account described it, a ‘revolutionary picture’ of public demonstrations declaring their support for Slovak national rights and for Hlinka within the town.²⁵⁵ Slovak journalists in the United States condemned the failure of the rest of the world to respond to an apparent miscarriage of justice by a politically motivated court. As Furdek argued forcefully in his *Jednota* newspaper editorial in December 1906:

The tyrannical sentence of this ‘Nero’s court’ is an appalling offence against humanity. Were a few Jews in Bialystok in Russia to be killed during a pogrom, an uproar would develop across the civilised world and our [American] government would be called upon to interfere into the internal affairs of Russia, in the name of humanity. [But] No-one stands up for the Slavs. Slovaks, wherever they live, should organise meetings for this cause, in which the brutality of this Magyar verdict ought to be made known to the American public.²⁵⁶

Sixty of these so-called ‘indignation meetings’, held by Slovaks to protest the Ružomberok trial and the Hungarian system of government more generally, took place throughout 1907.²⁵⁷ The largest such assembly was held in February in Cleveland’s Grays’ Armory; an estimated crowd of ten thousand listened to speeches

²⁵⁵ ‘Dopis z kraja’, *Jednota*, 11 July 1906, p. 4. See also “Zmok” [Anon.], ‘Ružomberok’, *Jednota*, 22 Aug. 1906, p. 4; “Slovák” [Anon.], ‘Ružomberok’, *Jednota*, 26 Sep. 1906, p. 4.

²⁵⁶ *Jednota*, 12 Dec. 1906, p. 4.

²⁵⁷ *Jednota*, 16 Jan. 1907, p. 4; *Jednota*, 23 Feb. 1907, p. 1; *Jednota*, 10 Apr. 1907, p. 4-5; *Jednota*, 1 May 1907, p. 4; *Jednota*, 26 June 1907, p. 4; Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 299.

from Furdek, other Slovak American leaders as well the mayor of Cleveland. The interior of the hall was decorated with large portraits of Hlinka and Šrobár, who were portrayed as two ‘Slovak martyrs’ whose cause was upheld during the rally.²⁵⁸

It was in this environment of political persecution in the ‘old country’ and heightened nationalist agitation in the Slovak American community that the leaders of the migrant colony established a common political organisation. At a Congress of held before a crowd of several thousand Slovaks in Cleveland’s Grays’ Armory in May 1907, representatives of each of the major Slovak fraternal organisations, newspapers, Sokol bodies and other groups backed the creation of the Slovak League of America.²⁵⁹ The Slovak League’s stated purpose was to promote ‘the mental, material, spiritual, social and political uplifting of the Slovak Nation; so that it will not succumb during its struggle for existence but rather enter ranks alongside all other distinguished nations, as an equal with equals’.²⁶⁰ Alongside specific tasks, such as the publication of books and pamphlets that would ‘raise national consciousness’ among a Slovak readership, the League also assumed responsibility for providing ‘material support for Slovak national interests, both in the old country and in America’.²⁶¹ Unlike the fraternal organisations, whose assistance for Slovak writers and politicians through a ‘national fund’ was secondary to providing material benefits for its membership, the Slovak League of America had a predominantly

²⁵⁸ *Jednota*, 23 Feb. 1907, p. 1, p. 5.

²⁵⁹ Different figures of the attendance at the founding meeting of the Slovak League have been provided, likely based on diverging estimates that were made at the time: Čulen for example cites a total audience of seven thousand for the event, whereas Stolárik gives a figure of ten thousand spectators. Neither figure is implausible, but in any case, the event was a significant, mass meeting of Slovaks in the United States. See Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 306; Stolárik, ‘The Role of the American Slovaks’, f. 25.

²⁶⁰ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 2, inv. č. 21, porad. č. 48, *Stanovy Slovenskej Lígy, utvorenej dňa 26 mája 1907 na Národnom Kongresse v Cleveland, Ohio, Opravené z nariadenis Kongressu odbývaného dňa 5. júla 1909 v Pittsburghu, PA*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerického Slavonického Gazeta Publishing Co., [1909], 1jd/16s, f. 3.

²⁶¹ *Stanovy Slovenskej Lígy*, f. 3-4.

transatlantic political purpose from its creation. The new organisation did not operate as a fraternal society providing financial benefits to its members, but was rather ‘a Slovak organisation dedicated to national tasks’.²⁶² The League used its own membership fees and more significantly, direct sums regularly voted to the organisation from the ‘national funds’ of Slovak fraternal societies, to carry out its cultural and political agenda. Its support for nationalist projects was determined by an executive committee involving delegates from the chief Slovak societies and newspaper editors.²⁶³ The League’s constitution determined that its paid officeholders would be voted into their posts by an annual congress of the League’s membership. The organisation was headed by a President, among whose chief tasks was ‘the maintenance of contacts between the League and our brothers in Slovakia [Upper Hungary]’.²⁶⁴ Štefan Furdek was elected as the first president of the organisation, with the role reverting to Rovnianek from 1909: demonstrating in one sense the Slovak League’s claim to be an organisation that represented and united both Catholic and non-denominational Slovak American institutions for the national cause.²⁶⁵

The inspiration for the Slovak League of America came from the Irish-American community, whose nationalist political organisations had already achieved a close degree of cooperation with the homeland national movement. The inspiration of these fellow, transatlantic nationalists can be clearly found in the remarks of Furdek after the inauguration of the Slovak League. In a *Jednota* editorial entitled

²⁶² *Jednota*, 5 June 1907, p. 4; Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 302.

²⁶³ *Stanovy Slovenskej Lígy*, f. 4-5.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 6-7, f. 11.

²⁶⁵ Slovak Institute, ‘Personalities File, Štefan Furdek, 1855-1915’, ‘Slovak League of America: Order of Presidents’, f. 1.

‘The Slovak League and the Old Country’, published in November 1907, Furdek declared that:

The Irish League [the United Irish League of America, founded in New York in 1901]²⁶⁶ has proved its worth. By aid to its Irish countrymen in the struggle for the rights of their nation it is has reached the cusp of victory. It is not merely the dawn [of nationalist success] in Ireland today; in Ireland that has already dawned. Why should this not prove to be the case with the Slovak League as well?²⁶⁷

While Furdek’s description of the annual sum of Irish nationalist contributions was too high according to the estimates of modern historians, the point of Furdek implored migrants ‘to sacrifice for the Slovak League [...] to buy the medals and stamps of the Slovak League [...] to hold collections for the League during your leisure time, at christening parties and other merry get-togethers’, so that the Slovak League could ‘perform marvels’ with the funds at its disposal.²⁶⁸ The Slovak League produced thousands of commemorative medals that bore a portrait of the Slovak national party leader, Pavol Mudroň and the declaration ‘I am proud to be a Slovak’ on one side, with the slogan ‘For our Slovak language’ inscribed on its opposite side.²⁶⁹ As Seton-Watson recorded a few years later these emblems of the Slovak League of America readily circulated among Slovak-speakers in Upper Hungary - leading to an order from the Hungarian Minister of the Interior for local authorities to ban ‘the sale or use of these stamps and medals, and enjoining the confiscation of the

²⁶⁶ D. Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America, The Politics of Exile, 1798-1998*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 132.

²⁶⁷ *Jednota*, 20 Nov. 1907, p. 4.

²⁶⁸ *Idem*; Brundage places the total contribution from the United Irish League of America to the Irish Parliamentary Party at £60,000 between 1901 and 1912: still a significant sum of money but not the level that Furdek suggested. The total level of support by Irish American organisations for Irish nationalists in the old country may well have reached or surpassed Furdek’s claimed total in individual years, but this was not the comparison being made. See Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, p. 132.

²⁶⁹ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 288.

latter'.²⁷⁰ In its initial fundraising drive, the Slovak League of America raised \$12,000 for the support of Slovak national cause in the old country, of which \$7,000 helped to support Slovak newspapers and politicians in protracted and costly legal battles with the Hungarian authorities.²⁷¹

The creation of the Slovak League of America was the fruition of repeated attempts by Slovak American leaders to combine the resources of the Slovak fraternal organisations, divided as they were by religious denomination and by the squabbles among newspaper editors. The League's premise was to operate as an umbrella organisation, through which the migrant colony's resources would be organised collectively for the Slovak national cause. As will become clear in later chapters, the officeholders within the Slovak League often had a thankless task in seeking to establish a united effort among the various Slovak American groups and leaders. Between its creation in 1907 and the establishment of a new Czechoslovak state at the end of the First World War, however, the Slovak League succeeded in establishing itself as an essentially sovereign political body in Slovak American life. It held an intangible but clear degree of legitimacy as the sole representative body of the Slovak American community: or more precisely, to represent the views of the fraternal officers and journalists who were closely involved in the League's nationalist politics.

Slovak nationalism was reshaped as a transatlantic political movement at the turn of the twentieth century through the close interaction of Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary with Slovak American organisations and migrant nationalist leaders. The relationship between the two centres of the Slovak national movement was not

²⁷⁰ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 288.

²⁷¹ Stolárik, 'The Role of the American Slovaks', f. 26.

always harmonious, and in the 1890s the traditional Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary felt obliged to intervene in the internal squabbling of the new migrant organisations and leaders in the United States. Personal and political conflicts in one centre of Slovak national life affected the other through the transatlantic Slovak press, which became established through the regular movement of journalists, funds and content between Upper Hungary and the United States. Both the regular Slovak American press as well as the annual almanacs provided not only news items relating to events in the old country, but also conveyed the political ideas of the Slovak nationalist intelligentsia, from its nationalist poet Svetozvár Hurban-Vajanský to Hlasist leaders like Vavro Šrobár and Pavol Blaho.

The intensified period of nationalist political persecution under the Wekerle administration in Hungary from 1906, symbolised by the 'Černová massacre' of the following year, brought Slovak American agitation to its crescendo before the First World War. This was demonstrated by extensive fundraising for the political and legal causes of the homeland as well as the mass rallies of Slovak Americans known as 'indignation meetings', to protest the treatment of their compatriots in the old country. This collective effort of Slovak American organisations for the homeland nationalist cause was enshrined in the Slovak League of America: established with a consciously transatlantic agenda for nationalist agitation. The creation of the Slovak League was also directly inspired by their Irish counterparts in the United States, whose United Irish League of America served as a model for directing financial aid and strategic political support for a homeland nationalist campaign. The multi-ethnic society of the United States allowed Slovak American leaders to mimic the practices of other national groups for their own nationalist political goals. The Irish-American

community had the most influence upon Slovak nationalist leaders, as it provided an example of how national and (predominantly Catholic) religious organisations could influence the course of Irish nationalism in the old country. From the public commemoration of saints' days to the establishment of a non-denominational political organisation, Slovak American leaders adapted these practices for their own cause. The Slovak League of America was to play a crucial role in determining the course of Slovak nationalism during and immediately after the First World War.

The integration of Slovak American organisations into Slovak national life created a transatlantic political movement at the turn of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Its political campaigns were conducted in an inherently transatlantic manner. The greater resources held by the mass membership, Slovak American organisations were crucial to the support of the Slovak nationalist press, election campaigns and legal costs to defend its homeland leadership against politically-motivated prosecutions in the final years of the Hungarian state. As the Slovak National Party entered active parliamentary politics, it received more concerted support through bodies such as the Central Slovak National Committee, which directed funds collected among Slovak Americans from New York to Upper Hungary. Autonomous in their internal decision-making, yet linked by extensive ties of financial support, correspondence and co-ordinated political projects, the centres of Slovak nationalism found in the United States and Upper Hungary offered a stronger bulwark to the threat of 'Magyarisation' than a solely homeland-based national movement. The transatlantic nature of Slovak nationalism explains why this minority political movement in Upper Hungary survived, and in the twentieth

century asserted a more ambitious set of political and territorial claims to Upper Hungary as 'Slovakia': a Slovak national homeland.

Chapter 5: The ‘Slovak Question’ in Hungary and Transatlantic Slovak Nationalism, 1907-1914

Slovak American groups played a central role in shaping the course of Slovak nationalism before the First World War. As this study has also shown, however, there were also distinct political factions operating within the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary. As the Slovak national movement failed to attain national rights in the Hungarian state, and even fell back as a force of political importance following a disastrous election defeat in 1910, the joint effort of Slovak political leaders was replaced by bickering and recrimination. From an emerging Slovak socialist movement on the political left to an independent, Slovak Catholic People’s Party on the right, diverging strategies were used to further the Slovak national cause, as it came to be viewed through the lens of these distinct political ideologies. Each of these political factions in Upper Hungary had its counterpart organisation and supporters among Slovak groups in the United States. The fraternal societies and other institutions within the Slovak American community were also divided into competing confessional and secular forms of organisation, while liberal and socialist organisations had also developed in the migrant colony. As factions within the Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary sought assistance for their own set of political projects, they found useful allies among the Slovak American organisations whose leaders shared their ideological agenda. This chapter will show how Slovak political and organisational leaders identified with the cause of their ideologically similar counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic, contributing to the schism among different branches of the Slovak national movement on the eve of the First World War. In this way, the factional divisions of Slovak nationalism in Upper

Hungary were deepened by the influence of Slovak American groups. Meanwhile, the institutional splits within the Slovak American community were also perpetuated by the diverging political programs of nationalist leaders in the homeland. This development helps to explain why Slovak American leaders found themselves badly split on their political response to the outbreak of the First World War. The fracturing of the Slovak national coalition into rival and sometimes openly hostile groups after the creation of the Czechoslovak state in 1918 also took place along the ideological divides that were formed in this immediate pre-war period. The longer course of Slovak political nationalism in the twentieth century was therefore fundamentally shaped by this most intensive phase of transatlantic political activity before the First World War.

The shift from a collective effort of the Slovak national movement towards factionalism took place in the context of the failure of Slovak nationalists to advance their goals within the Hungarian political system. While Slovak nationalists secured an electoral breakthrough by winning seven deputies in the Budapest parliament at the 1906 election, the governing Wekerle administration did not recognise the principle of Slovak national rights in Hungary. The most significant reform to impact the nationalities' question was in the field of education, where a new law known as the 'Apponyi Act' was passed by the Hungarian Parliament in 1907.¹ This reform extended policies that had enshrined the use of the Magyar language in state-owned schools into church-operated schools as well: all primary schools in Hungary were now obliged to ensure that pupils could fully express themselves in the Magyar

¹ A. Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918*, London: Longman, 1989, p. 209; O. V. Johnson, 'Losing Faith: The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle, 1906-1914', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 22 (Jan. 1998), p. 296.

language by the end of their fourth year of primary school.² School teachers became employees of the Hungarian state and were themselves obliged to be able to read write and teach in the Magyar language; as state employees, teachers were also expected to demonstrate loyalty by refraining from taking part in the minority nationalist movements.³ As one nationalist bitterly complained, if a teacher now ‘wished to fulfil the genuine purpose of public schooling’ by teaching to a largely Slovak-speaking classroom in that language, ‘master Apponyi would make them unemployed’ as a consequence.⁴ The Apponyi Act of 1907 furthered what had been an ongoing deterioration of the position of the Slovak language in Hungarian schools. Secondary schools, which prepared students for many of the bureaucratic roles within the Hungarian state, had already excluded Slovak language instruction from the curriculum in the 1880s: since no Slovak language institution remained in place, a few thousand Slovak students per year attended these schools under Magyar language instruction.⁵ The Apponyi Act brought forward this process of ‘Magyarisation’ to the earliest years of education to promote the Magyar language as a universal form of communication in Hungary.⁶ This was an ambitious, long-term goal of Hungarian policy rather than an outcome achieved by the Wekerle administration: since in the 1910 Hungarian census nearly one third of the population had claimed to have no knowledge of the Magyar tongue.⁷ Similarly, while the Slovak language was formally excluded from Hungarian secondary schooling, it

² *Ludové Noviny*, 19 Apr. 1907, p. 1; *Ludové Noviny*, 10 Sep. 1909, p. 1.

³ O. V. Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938: Education and the Making of a Nation*, Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1985, p. 34; J. R. Felak, *‘At the Price of the Republic’: Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party, 1929-1938*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993, p. 12.

⁴ *Ludové Noviny*, 10 Sep. 1909, p. 1.

⁵ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 34.

⁶ A. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825-1945*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 111; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, London: Archibald and Constable, 1908, p. 398.

⁷ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, p. 127.

nevertheless remained a language of instruction for the pragmatic reason that many new students lacked a sufficient knowledge of Magyar to be taught effectively in that language.⁸

Slovak nationalists viewed electoral reform as a means of gaining meaningful political influence, but these hopes were dashed by the political leadership in Hungary. The Slovak nationalist coalition had fought their election campaign in 1906 calling for universal male suffrage and the introduction of a secret ballot system in Hungary.⁹ Count Andrassy, acting for the new Wekerle government, proposed a set of reforms in 1908 that fell well short of both key stipulations from the Slovak nationalist point of view.¹⁰ Suffrage would have been extended to the majority of men in Hungary: the value of their votes was qualified however according to a byzantine set of plural voting criteria; while the secret ballot was not proposed.¹¹ Slovak nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic were hostile to the proposed electoral reforms which were described in various organs as a 'great injustice' and providing 'neither equal, nor secret, nor universal suffrage rights in Hungary'.¹² As Owen Johnson has noted, however, divisions within the coalition government over the issue proved fateful. Andrassy's bill was not seriously considered by the Hungarian Parliament and the Wekerle administration dropped the question of electoral reform.¹³ The suffrage question remained unresolved when the governing coalition in Hungary collapsed in the autumn of 1909, leaving Slovak nationalists no

⁸ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 31.

⁹ *Jednota*, 22 Feb. 1905, p. 4-5.

¹⁰ Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', p. 298.

¹¹ 'Plural Votes for Hungary', *New York Times*, 18 Oct. 1908, p. C4. T. Zsuppán, 'The Hungarian Political Scene, 1908-1918', in M. Cornwall (ed.), *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary: Essays in Political and Military History*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990, p. 68.

¹² *Jednota*, 14 Oct. 1908, p. 4. *Ludové Noviny*, 27 Nov. 1908, p. 1.

¹³ Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', p. 298.

closer to attaining suffrage reform as a means of gaining national rights within the Hungarian state.¹⁴

The pursuit of electoral reform led Slovak nationalists into a political deal that had disastrous consequences for their political representation in the Hungarian Parliament. Acting on behalf of the Slovak National Party leadership, the politician Milan Hodža came to an agreement with the caretaker government of Hungary, led by Count Khuen-Héderváry, prior to new elections being held in 1910.¹⁵ The terms of the electoral pact stated that eight Slovak National Party candidates would be fielded in Upper Hungary, who would campaign unopposed by a government-backed candidate; in exchange, Slovak nationalists were expected to lend their support to government candidates in the remaining voting districts in Upper Hungary.¹⁶ The purpose of this alliance was to re-elect the caretaker government to introduce both a universal suffrage bill and enforce the 1868 Nationality Act, with the assistance of Slovak and other minority nationalist parties.¹⁷ The Slovak National Party mobilised its election campaign on this basis, calling on activists ‘to organise public assemblies for the cause of universal suffrage and the secret ballot’ across Upper Hungary in February 1910.¹⁸ The Hungarian elections of June 1910, however, resulted in a landslide victory for the National Party of Work led by Count István Tisza.¹⁹ Tisza’s party won sixty-one seats in Upper Hungary, with Tisza himself securing election to Parliament in a predominantly Slovak-speaking district.²⁰ Against both this electoral challenge and that of the Hungarian People’s Party, Slovak nationalists secured just

¹⁴ Johnson, ‘The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle’, p. 299.

¹⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁶ *Idem.*

¹⁷ *Idem.*

¹⁸ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 39, inv. č. 1495, poč. č. 13, Pavel Mudroň to Pavol Blaho, Martin, 26 Feb. 1910, f. 8.

¹⁹ Zsuppán, ‘The Hungarian Political Scene’, p. 69.

²⁰ Johnson, ‘The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle’, p. 299.

three seats in the Hungarian Parliament.²¹ Slovak nationalist representation in the Hungarian Parliament had therefore halved from the previous election campaign of 1906, with little prospect of securing their political objectives under the new Tisza-dominated Parliament. When an electoral reform that increased the electorate by 40% was finally passed by the Hungarian Parliament in 1913, the right to vote was qualified by age, taxes paid and above all by degree of education.²² The education qualification disproportionately affected the Slovak and other national minority sections of the population and was opposed on this basis by Slovak nationalists.²³ The rump of Slovak nationalist delegates did not even participate in the parliamentary debate over the suffrage bill though: for Slovak nationalists were frequently absent from or did not speak in parliamentary sessions.²⁴ In 1914 Slovak nationalists had been reduced to just two representatives out of 413 members of Parliament in Hungary.²⁵ Having adopted electoral activity as a tactic to achieve Slovak national rights in Hungary at the beginning of the century, Slovak nationalists had come no closer to realising their goals.

The failure of the Slovak nationalist electoral strategy undermined the fragile unity of the ideological factions within the national movement in Upper Hungary. The Slovak nationalist campaign of 1906, for example, was conducted by a partnership between the conservative leadership of the Slovak National Party and the more populist 'Hlasist' and clerical factions that led the Slovak People's Party. While this coalition had achieved tangible success in the previous parliamentary election

²¹ Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', p. 299.

²² Ibid., p. 299-300.

²³ Ibid., p. 300.

²⁴ Idem.

²⁵ K. Sidor, 'Zásahy Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike do politického vývinu slovenského (1914-1939)', in M. Šprinc (ed.), *Slovenská Líga v Amerike: Štyridsatročná*, Scranton, PA: Obrana Press, 1947, p. 30.

campaign, the disastrous electoral pact made by the SNP leadership in 1910 was sharply criticised by other Slovak nationalist leaders. A Catholic and populist newspaper based in Pressburg concluded that ‘the position of Slovaks has universally worsened’ in the aftermath of the election, declaring in broader terms that ‘our land is decaying under the scourge of an awful and scandalous election system - until this is remedied, then the law will remain a plaything of unscrupulous men’.²⁶ Another editorial piece argued that the electoral defeat stemmed from the fact that the Slovak National Party’s leadership ‘was not prepared for the politics of government[...] nor for the election campaign’ of 1910.²⁷ Milan Hodža’s role in negotiating the electoral pact with the Hungarian caretaker administration was also sharply criticised by the emerging Catholic faction, whose leaders concluded that the Lutheran Slovak politician had ‘led the nation into a defile’ by crafting the disastrous strategy.²⁸ The prevailing Slovak nationalist strategy had not led to a steady increase of electoral support for its nationalist parties, nor had it secured the right to Slovak language instruction in Hungarian schools or local administration.

The ideological divisions between factions of the Slovak national movement sharpened in the absence of any discernible progress for their collective political cause in Upper Hungary. The most significant conflict that emerged in the immediate pre-war period was between the Catholic faction and the leadership of the Slovak National Party. The generation of Slovak priests and political leaders that took up the nationalist cause in Upper Hungary from 1900 had been a product of the Hungarian People’s Party, the first political party to agitate against policies such as civil marriage among the largely Catholic, Slovak-speaking population in Upper Hungary.

²⁶ *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 16 Sep. 1910, p. 1.

²⁷ *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 17 June 1910, p. 1.

²⁸ *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 24 April 1912, p. 2.

Slovak Catholic leaders such as Andrej Hlinka, Ferdiš Juriga and František Skyčák were typically priests and had originally been members of the Hungarian People's Party.²⁹ Their agitation in support of the rights of the Church and the Slovak language in Hungary was sustained through their participation in the Slovak nationalist political groups as a distinctive faction, as well as through Slovak Catholic cultural organisations such as the Society of Saint Vojtech.³⁰ Their views were also set out in newspapers such as *Katolícke Noviny* (Catholic News) and from 1911 the highly political *Slovenské Ludové Noviny* (The Slovak People's News), which was published in Pressburg by a committee of editors that included Hlinka and Juriga.³¹ Following that newspaper's criticism of Slovak nationalist strategy in the 1910 Hungarian election, the Slovak nationalist press in Upper Hungary descended into bitter polemic exchanges. The Hlasist writer Anton Štefánek openly accused the editors of *Slovenské Ludové Noviny* of being in the pay of the Hungarian government; while other newspapers such as Milan Hodža's *Slovenský týždenník* criticised Andrej Hlinka and other leaders of the clerical nationalist faction.³² In their own polemics, Slovak Catholic leaders denounced the progressive Hlasist faction for being influenced by the secular, Czech politician Tomáš Masaryk, who they described as 'a religious lout' and whose views they considered 'a spiritual poison among much of the youth here'.³³ The conflict escalated to the point that the Slovak National Party was forced to convene its own 'national court' to reprimand all parties, call for an immediate end to the 'personal disputes and attacks' among

²⁹ Felak, 'At the Price of the Republic', p. 10-11.

³⁰ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 37.

³¹ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 13 Oct. 1911, p. 1.

³² Idem; C. and H. Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary*, London: Methuen, 1981, p. 83.

³³ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 6 Oct. 1911, p. 3; *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 22 Sep. 1911, p. 1.

Slovak political leaders and bar one Catholic writer from contributing to the *Slovenské ľudové noviny* for three months for having published an article deemed offensive towards the Lutheran faith.³⁴

The intervention of the Slovak National Party leadership could not, however, quell conflict between its disparate factions of support, which ultimately sprang from two major causes of grievance between the clerical political faction and the other camps in the national movement. Firstly, the ideology of the clerical, Catholic faction was directly opposed to the progressive wing of the Slovak national movement, whose leaders had risen to prominence in the Slovak National Party by 1910. The prominently anticlerical views of Hlasist leaders and SNP activists like Vavro Šrobár conflicted with the aim of Slovak Catholic leaders to uphold the rights of both the Church and the Slovak nation in Upper Hungary. As self-styled ‘Progressives’ such as Šrobár as well as Milan Hodža gained greater standing within the Slovak National Party than their Catholic rivals, the structure of that party was viewed with increasing suspicion by the clerical nationalist faction. Catholic writers spoke of a new ideological strain of ‘young Lutheranism’ within the Slovak National Party, which it claimed sought to ‘spread anticlericalism among Catholics’ living in Upper Hungary.³⁵ The Catholic faction also expressed its opposition to proposed co-operation between Slovak nationalists and the social democratic movement in Hungary: denouncing attempts by the Slovak National Party to cooperate with an emerging group of Slovak socialist leaders on voting reform.³⁶ Slovak Catholic leaders declared that that the socialist movement was ‘opposed to religion, opposed to nationhood[...] against the status of marriage and all personal property’: a

³⁴ *Národné noviny*, 14 Nov. 1912, p. 2-3.

³⁵ *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 28 Feb. 1913, p. 1.

³⁶ *Idem*.

partnership with the socialists was therefore not conducive to maintaining Slovak national rights and those of the Catholic faith in Upper Hungary.³⁷ Another article in the Catholic press focused on the ethnicity of the leaders of the international socialist movement, declaring that ‘Jewdom is its father and paymaster’ and so ought to be rejected by Slovak Catholic masses.³⁸ As the Catholic faction identified itself in opposition to the both the liberal wing of the Slovak national movement and the Slovak socialists, it found itself at odds with the strategy of the Slovak National Party on the eve of the First World War.

Both the Catholic and Hlasist factions had stood in the 1906 Hungarian election on a single ticket as the ‘Slovak People’s Party’, but by 1910 these Slovak nationalist factions had been brought together once more within the umbrella organisation of the SNP.³⁹ As viewed by many clerical leaders, however, their integration into this coalition was not sufficiently rewarded by influence in the party’s decision-making bodies. A commentary from the *Slovenské Ludové Noviny* newspaper in 1911 complained that:

When distributing support for students the sons of rich lawyers or [Lutheran] ministers and even fools and vulgar candidates receive support - so long as they are a Lutheran and not a Catholic youth. Catholics are admitted to various committees only by some accident. Where there is one or even ten [Catholic members], they call for unanimity by religious group [in the committee’s decision-making]. But when they have at least one more member then they declare: ‘let the majority decide’. They would clothe the nation itself in Lutheran garments.⁴⁰

Slovak Catholic leaders also created an increasingly assertive interpretation of their role within the Slovak national movement, in which their recent conflicts with the

³⁷ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 28 Nov. 1913, p. 1.

³⁸ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 12 Apr. 1912, p. 1.

³⁹ Johnson, ‘The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle’, p. 295.

⁴⁰ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 22 Sep. 1911, p. 1.

Hungarian regime were cast as the most significant developments for the national cause. Another commentary from the Slovak Catholic press claimed, for example, that ‘in the five years since Černová [the Černová Massacre of 1907] Slovak Catholics have been awoken as if by a magic wand [...] The nation was enflamed. [...] The Slovak Lutherans - who had only ever acted “with caution” - stuck to their motto of “enrich ourselves” and proceeded to that end’.⁴¹ This polemic accused the SNP leadership of using funds that been raised to support for the orphans and the prosecuted villagers from the Černová affair to pay for the legal costs of their defence.⁴² Its narrative inverted the typical relationship of the two religious denominations within the Slovak national movement that had been held during the nineteenth century. The Slovak Catholic press now claimed that the persecution by the Hungarian authorities, as faced by leaders such as Andrej Hlinka, as well as displays of broader Slovak Catholic unrest such as the crowds during the Černová affair, were the radical, mobilising force within the Slovak national movement. The traditional Lutheran leadership of the SNP in Martin was denounced for its cautious strategy: while even their claim to the ‘nationalist’ label was put in doubt - at least in the case of some members of the party hierarchy who attracted clerical ire.

Each of these sources of discontent played a role in the dispute that ultimately provoked the Catholic split from the SNP. The last straw took place in the small town of Ružomberok in central Upper Hungary, which served as the chief base of political activity for the nationalist priest Andrej Hlinka as well as the Hlasist intellectual Vavro Šrobár. By 1910, Šrobár had gained enough influence within the local SNP organisation to place his close allies on to the election committee. They

⁴¹ *Slovenské ľudové Noviny*, 22 Sep. 1911, p. 1.

⁴² *Idem*.

duly ensured his nomination under the SNP ticket alongside other nationalist candidates for local elections.⁴³ The degree of Hlasist influence over the local SNP body led Hlinka and his allies to abandon the group in protest, declaring the local party to be ‘permeated with atheism and hostility towards Catholicism’.⁴⁴ The Catholic faction ran a rival candidate to the official set of SNP candidates in the local elections in January 1913, but were defeated.⁴⁵ Within days of the outcome, Hlinka wrote to the SNP leader Pavol Mudroň announcing his decision to leave the party, citing the electoral alliance between SNP candidates with ‘Magyarone Jews’ in the Ružomberok contest as the chief reason for his departure.⁴⁶ Hlinka instead turned to his editorial colleagues at the *Slovenské Ľudové Noviny* newspaper, who in December 1912 reformed the ‘Slovak People’s Party’ as an independent body to the rest of the Slovak national movement.⁴⁷ Its leadership declared that:

The Slovak People’s Party has always stood and stands now on the foundations of Christianity. It is for the autonomy of the Church [...] Atheism it regards as a great danger. It is for the sacred and indivisible rite of marriage and for this reason calls for a revision to the so-called Church-state laws. It is decisively against liberals and Masarykists [the Slovak, Hlasist followers of Masaryk’s philosophy] who renounce our Church and it also opposes the atheist views of social democracy

[...]

[The People’s Party] is Christian first and foremost. The true faith of our people is our ultimate cause and our most sacred religion is our dearest treasure [...] It is Slovak [and] national. The honour of our Slovak language is our supreme natural objective and the natural rights of our Slovak language in every field of public life is for us the dearest treasure after the true faith.⁴⁸

⁴³ *Slovenské Ľudové Noviny*, 7 Feb. 1913, p. 3.

⁴⁴ *Idem*.

⁴⁵ *Idem*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁷ *Slovenské Ľudové Noviny*, 6 Dec. 1912, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Idem*.

In line with the stance of the Slovak National Party before the First World War, its leadership also declared its affection for ‘our beloved Hungarian land’: both wings of the Slovak national movement sought to achieve their political goals solely within the framework of the Hungarian state.⁴⁹ While Hlinka was to play a dominant role in the People’s Party after the First World War, the senior political figure within the new party was Ferdiš Juriga, who served as the party’s sole delegate in the Hungarian Parliament.

The prospects of the independent, Slovak People’s Party within the Hungarian political system were never determined. Within a year of the party’s formation, Europe had descended into a general war that resulted in the Kingdom of Hungary being dissolved. The People’s Party therefore never took part in a significant election campaign in Upper Hungary, and it is only possible to speculate on the longevity of this Slovak nationalist schism under a peacetime, Hungarian regime. The clerical politics promoted by Slovak Catholic political leaders such as the Slovak parliamentarian Ferdiš Juriga, the nationalist priest and agitator Andrej Hlinka and prominent writers such as Florián Tománek had always sat somewhat uneasily with other factions within the Slovak nationalist coalition. As the Hlasist faction gained influence within the Slovak National Party, and as the SNP began to cooperate with the social democratic movement, the ideological conflict between the Catholic faction and the rest of the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary intensified. After 1910, both the profound ideological differences between Slovak nationalist factions and the personal rivalries of leaders like Vavro Šrobár and Andrej Hlinka became serious internal problems for the Slovak national movement. Whereas

⁴⁹ *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 6 Dec. 1912, p. 1.

in the previous decade Slovak leaders in the ‘old country’ had largely set aside their differences to achieve modest electoral success. The failure of the Slovak national movement to retain more than a handful of MPs in Budapest, and the deteriorating status of the Slovak language in key areas such as education policy, fostered recrimination and polemic squabbles among its various factions. Their internal divisions were more significant than the external pressure of ‘Magyarisation’ by the policies of the Hungarian state in determining the Slovak nationalist agenda on the eve of the First World War.

Transatlantic Catholic nationalism and the Slovak National Movement, 1906-1914

Among the political factions that shaped Slovak nationalism on the outbreak of war, clerical or politically Catholic nationalism had a major influence and took a transatlantic form. The political outlook of the Catholic nationalist faction in the ‘old country’ was shared in the United States. The Slovak Catholic community in the United States was supported by the creation of separate social organisations, such as the Catholic Sokol gymnastic organisation from 1905.⁵⁰ Slovak American leaders also used the model of the mass-membership *Katholikentage* rallies held by German Catholics, and created similar events such as the ‘Slovak Catholic Congress’, in which the Slovak American clergy and thousands of the faithful took part in 1905

⁵⁰ M. M. Stolárik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870-1918’, (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1974), f. 78.

and 1906.⁵¹ In 1911, Slovak Catholic leaders formed the ‘Association of Slovak Catholics in America’ (*Združenie Slovenských Katolíkov v Amerike*), which brought together members of the Catholic union and other groups to ‘defend our principles of faith among American Slovaks, to unite Slovak Catholics as one body and to support Catholic interests’ within the Slovak migrant community as part of a wider social and cultural agenda.⁵² The priest Ján Porubský, acting as chairman of the Association, declared that the body had been formed in response to ‘the daily proliferation of attacks against our faith [...] that under the false pretence of “freedom” are leading our resentful and misguided people to disavow divine and worldly authority’.⁵³ In the same way that Slovak nationalist priests in Upper Hungary defended the status of the Catholic Church against both the actions of the liberal Hungarian state and the anticlerical polemics of socialists and liberal Slovak nationalists, Slovak Catholic organisations in the United States sought to uphold their faith within the migrant community.

Slovak Catholic leaders drew upon this shared ideological outlook to offer political support to their counterparts on the opposite side of the Atlantic. This strategy was set out in its clearest form in a circular sent by the Catholic priest and Slovak nationalist politician Ferdiš Juriga to Slovak organisations in the United States in July 1906. Juriga announced that an editorial committee had been formed at the *Ludové Noviny* offices, whose purpose was ‘to direct national activities among

⁵¹ *Jednota*, 6 June 1906, p. 4; *Jednota*, 5 Sep. 1906, p. 4-5; J. J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 80.

⁵² *Jednota*, 15 Feb. 1911, p. 4.

⁵³ *Idem*.

Catholics - whose slumber until now has held back the cause of the entire nation'.⁵⁴ He urged Slovak leaders in the United States to form 'a similar committee among yourselves so that we can work together systematically', further declaring that 'we [in Upper Hungary] would form the lower chamber and you would be the upper chamber' in this partnership.⁵⁵ This letter demonstrates that the Slovak American community was understood to be an equal partner alongside the homeland leadership within the nationalist movement. At the same time however, the document points to the factional interests that had developed within Slovak nationalism. The Slovak American historian Marián Stolárik has interpreted this appeal from homeland nationalists as a call for Slovak national unity, claiming that such letters from Slovak leaders in Upper Hungary 'urged the American Slovaks to emulate their example and to submerge their differences' (perhaps envisaging the Slovak League of America, formed the following year)⁵⁶. Yet the appeal published by Juriga and accessible in the archives of the Matica Slovenská in Slovakia contradicts this argument. Rather than calling for all Slovak American leaders to unite under the proposed committee, Juriga specifically directed the leaders of Catholic organisations such as Furdek, Matúš Jankola and Ján Porubský to form a sister organisation to his own political committee in Upper Hungary. The list of names suggested by Juriga for the Slovak American group omitted the leading members of the politically secular National Slovak Society Peter Rovnianek and Anton Ambrose.⁵⁷ Juriga described the project's aim as 'the embracing of Slovak Catholics of Hungary with [their counterparts in]

⁵⁴ AMS, Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 108, porad. č. 425, Ferdiš Juriga to Slovaks in USA, Vajnory, 6 July 1906, ljd/4s., f. 2-3.

⁵⁵ Juriga to Slovaks in USA, f. 3.

⁵⁶ M. M. Stolárik, 'The Role of the American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914-1918'. (University of Ottawa, MA Thesis, 1968), f. 24-25.

⁵⁷ Juriga to Slovaks in USA, f. 3-4.

America in one [body]' in order to 'redeem' Slovaks from the threat of Magyarisation in Hungary.⁵⁸ While Juriga sought the collective support of Slovak American groups for other national causes, his organising committee at *Ludové Noviny* sought the participation of Slovak Catholic leaders alone on the other side of the Atlantic.

There were good reasons for the Catholic faction in Upper Hungary to seek co-operation from their counterparts in the Slovak migrant colony. While Juriga's appeal for support revealed to his transatlantic counterparts that *Ludové Noviny* had only seven hundred subscribing readers in Upper Hungary, Slovak Catholic institutions in the United States were in a position of great strength. The *Jednota* newspaper published by the Catholic Union claimed to have 'more readers than all the Catholic and non-Catholic, political and non-political newspapers' circulating in Upper Hungary in 1900.⁵⁹ The Slovak Catholic press, like the rival papers of Rovnianek, enjoyed far higher sales and circulation figures in the United States than in Upper Hungary.⁶⁰ The Catholic Union was also the largest fraternal organisation with more than 30,000 members when Juriga sought aid from the Slovak Catholic leadership in the United States.⁶¹ The specific idea of forming a joint political organisation for Slovak Catholics did not get off the ground; the appeal demonstrates, however, that transatlantic political cooperation was pursued by these like-minded factions on their own terms. In this way, political support was soon being exchanged between Slovak organisations on both sides of the Atlantic,

⁵⁸ Juriga to Slovaks in USA, f. 3-4.

⁵⁹ IHRCA, 'Correspondence of U.S. Slovaks', Furdek to Sasinek, Cleveland, OH, 25 May 1901, f. 2.

⁶⁰ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 17.

⁶¹ Balch Institute/HSP, 'Jednota (Katolícky Kalendár, 1898-1919, incomp.)', Box 1 of 1, *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, Middletown, PA: Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota, 1916, p. 53.

alongside and independently of their support for collective, Slovak nationalist projects.

An important factor that stimulated even closer transatlantic links between Slovak Catholic groups was the Černová Massacre of 1907. The fact however that the protesters had been Catholic parishioners gave the event additional meaning among Catholic organisations in the United States. *Jednota* declared that ‘at Černová sixteen Slovak men and women bled for the cause of our Slovak language. The townsfolk of Černová have presented to Slovaks a route to freedom. They have shown that in the dovelike Slovak hearts burns an inextinguishable flame of patriotism’.⁶² The lasting result of the Černová affair was the emergence of the nationalist Catholic priest Andrej Hlinka as a source of political veneration among Slovak Catholic leaders in the United States. His suspension from parish duties by a local Hungarian bishop, as well as his conviction by the secular authorities for ‘incitement against other nationalities’ during the 1906 election campaign in Ružomberok, had placed Hlinka’s ‘martyrdom’ at the centre of Slovak Catholic agitation in the United States. In July 1906, nearly twenty Slovak American priests signed a letter pledging their support for Hlinka’s cause in Upper Hungary and urging the Slovak nationalist priest ‘not to waver during this torment’ in a Hungarian prison cell.⁶³ As Hlinka’s case, on charges of simony, was being heard by Church officials in Rome in 1908, the new editor of *Jednota* Jozef Hušek encouraged Slovak groups in the United States to organise a mass petition in support of the priest, declaring that ‘the Slovak nation does not have a greater son than Hlinka. He has achieved more for the Slovak people than dozens of others [combined]. And if by

⁶² *Jednota*, 27 Nov. 1907, p. 4.

⁶³ *Jednota*, 25 July 1906, p. 4.

God's will he leaves that dark jail cell in good health then he will carry out many more works for the nation'.⁶⁴ In January 1909 Hušek termed Hlinka a 'great martyr' for the Slovak national cause in the Slovak American press; while in his private correspondence with Hlinka he welcomed the priest's release from prison, declaring on behalf of Slovak Catholics in the United States that 'our love greets you, a national hero, on your return once more to active work'.⁶⁵ Hušek later defended Hlinka from critics in the *Národné Noviny* newspaper in Pittsburgh, who had dismissed the prospect of the nationalist priest travelling to the United States on a political tour; he declared in *Jednota* that 'were Hlinka to come to America - and it is our heartfelt desire for this to happen as soon as possible - then he would receive a magnificent reception from us. Hlinka's cause can only be alien [...] to socialists, anarchists and atheists; his cause is not alien to us Slovak Catholics'.⁶⁶ Hušek closely identified the twin goals of protecting the Catholic faith and the Slovak national cause with Hlinka's political leadership in the old country. The political co-operation between these two Slovak Catholic leaders on opposite sides of the Atlantic lasted until Hlinka's death in 1938.

The ideological links between Slovak Catholic organisations in the United States and their counterparts in Upper Hungary were promoted by Hušek as editor of the *Jednota* newspaper. He set out his editorial stance at the annual convention of the Catholic Union in 1912, where he declared that the three goals of his organ were to 'protect the faith', 'protect the nation' and 'to secure the [fraternal] organisation'

⁶⁴ *Jednota*, 28 Oct. 1908, p. 4.

⁶⁵ *Jednota*, 6 Jan. 1909, p. 4; SNA, O. F. Andrej Hlinka, č. šk. 2, inv. č. 231, poč. č. 1, Jozef Hušek to Andrej Hlinka, Cleveland, OH, 5 Oct. 1909, f. 1.

⁶⁶ *Jednota*, 6 Aug. 1913, p. 4.

against external critics.⁶⁷ The fraternal organisation's motto of 'for God and the nation' thus formed a key part of the editorial agenda under Hušek's stewardship of *Jednota*.⁶⁸ Hušek promoted cooperation among the chiefly Catholic and Lutheran leaders of the Slovak American community at the expense of anticlerical and atheist critics. A *Jednota* editorial of December 1910 declared that 'we will join with all devout Slovaks, whether they are Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist or any other form of Christianity in the national cause. With non-believing Slovaks, who do not belong to any Christian church, we wish to have no further relationship in our public life'.⁶⁹ This sentiment was also voiced by the Association of Slovak Catholics in America in 1912, which passed a resolution that 'protests against the efforts of all Slovaks, who under the false name of 'nationalism without faith' [...] lure our people towards godlessness'.⁷⁰

The idea of cooperation among religiously devout Slovaks against their anticlerical and atheist currents in the migrant colony was not sustained, as the political schism developed between clerical nationalists and the Slovak National Party in the 'old country'. The bitter polemical battle among newspapers in Upper Hungary was transmitted to the United States: some of the most significant Slovak American newspapers opted to support the party leadership in Martin and denounced the formation of the independent, Slovak People's Party by Hlinka and other Catholic politicians. In the case of *Národné Noviny*, the official organ of the National Slovak Society from 1910, hostility towards the clerical faction in Upper Hungary

⁶⁷ IHRCA, Box SLK-19, Periodicals 'Za-', Prvá Slovenská Katolícka Jednota, 'Zápisnica XV. Konvencie Prvej Katolíckej Slovenskej Jednoty, od 2. do 8. júna 1912 v Cleveland, Oh', Middletown, PA: Tlačou "Jednoty", 1912, p. 105.

⁶⁸ *Jednota*, 16 Aug. 1911, p. 4; M. M. Stolarik, 'Slovak Immigrants Come to Terms with Religious Diversity in North America', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96: 1 (Jan. 2010), p. 73.

⁶⁹ *Jednota*, 14 Dec. 1910, p. 4.

⁷⁰ *Jednota*, 4 Dec. 1912, p. 1.

was influenced by its chief editor Ignác Gessay - a journalist whose political views were broadly within the 'progressive' faction of Slovak nationalism.⁷¹ Under Gessay's stewardship, the newspaper denounced the conduct of the Slovak Catholic politician Ferdiš Juriga and other nationalist Catholic priests in the old country for having 'saturated the earth [of Upper Hungary] with religious aggravations'.⁷² This claim was rebutted by the Catholic Union's official organ, which held that Juriga had been 'fundamentally correct in his tactics and means to fight against faithless elements' in Upper Hungary.⁷³ Gessay further criticised the clerical faction's *Ludové Noviny* newspaper for 'not agitating against Hungary, but rather launching insults at every upstanding Slovak' within the broader national movement in Upper Hungary.⁷⁴ Gessay also challenged the claims made by Jozef Hušek and other Catholic leaders in the United States that Andrej Hlinka had been victimised for his sincerely held nationalist and religious views: his newspaper declared instead that 'Hlinka has never been a martyr "for our Slovak language"; that was a clear facade onto which he daubed his own personal agenda, driven by his unbridled ambition'.⁷⁵ While *Národné Noviny* conceded that Hlinka 'may have done good work for the Catholic Church', Gessay openly questioned his commitment to the Slovak nationalist cause.⁷⁶ In this context, *Jednota* grouped *Národné Noviny* with socialist and other progressive organs in the United States, which it held responsible for 'kindling the flames of religious intolerance' among the Slovak American community.⁷⁷ On the issue of the Slovak nationalist schism in Upper Hungary, *Jednota* editor Jozef Hušek

⁷¹ Z. Pavelcová, 'V Spomienkach na Život a Dielo Ignáca Gessaya (1874-1928)', in Z. Pavelcová (ed.), *Slováci v Zahranici*, Vol. 31, 2015, p. 42.

⁷² *Národné Noviny*, 19 Dec. 1912, p. 4.

⁷³ *Jednota*, 8 Jan. 1913, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Národné Noviny*, 27 Mar. 1913, p. 4.

⁷⁵ *Národné Noviny*, 23 Jan. 1913, p. 4.

⁷⁶ *Idem*.

⁷⁷ *Jednota*, 8 Jan. 1913, p. 4.

expressed his regret that a separate Slovak People's Party had been created by Catholic leaders, but blamed the anticlerical factions within the Slovak national movement for this outcome.⁷⁸ He stated his belief that 'the American progressives have forfeited their honour and have greatly besmirched the honour of the Slovak nation; in Slovakia [Upper Hungary] the progressives are advancing towards the same end'.⁷⁹

The conflict between progressive and clerical factions among Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary was thus carried over and added to the rivalry between secular and religious Slovak organisations in the United States. The schism between the Catholic wing and the Slovak National Party was denounced by major fraternal organisations such as the National Slovak Society; while the leading Catholic fraternal society in the Slovak American community defended the actions of clerical leaders in the 'old country'. A shared ideology, based upon a defence of both 'God and the nation', was expressed by Catholic nationalist leaders such as Juriga and Hlinka in Upper Hungary and by the likes of Jozef Hušek in the United States through the *Jednota* newspaper.⁸⁰ The final few years before the First World War therefore saw the emergence of a coherent and transatlantic form of political Catholicism within the Slovak national movement. The leading, Catholic fraternal organisation among Slovak migrants was supplemented by new bodies such as the Association of Slovak Catholics, that were dedicated to supporting Catholicism in Slovak American life and in the political projects of the national movement. The consistent moral support offered by Catholic leaders in the United States meant that their counterparts in Upper Hungary were not at all isolated in their conflicts with the

⁷⁸ *Jednota*, 6 Aug. 1913, p. 4.

⁷⁹ *Idem*.

⁸⁰ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1916*, p. 32.

leadership of the Slovak National Party before 1914. On the contrary, the independent, Slovak People's Party that emerged from this conflict could potentially tap into the much larger resources of Slovak Catholic organisations on the opposite side of the Atlantic for its political support.

Transatlantic Slovak socialism and the Slovak National Movement before the First World War

As their role in the political schism between the clerical wing of Slovak nationalists and the rest of the national movement in Upper Hungary makes clear, Slovak socialist groups also shaped Slovak nationalism in important ways before 1914. Many of the aims of the Slovak nationalist programme were taken up by Slovak socialists, whose political organisations were incorporated as a faction within the Slovak national movement prior to the outbreak of the First World War. Slovak socialists operated in the final decades of the nineteenth century within the Hungarian Social Democratic Party - a body that was far smaller and more loosely organised than its counterpart in Austria, whose organisations boasted more than half a million trade union members by 1914.⁸¹ Social democracy was a much weaker force in Hungary than in Austria: in part due to the Hungarian state, which limited the right to association in order to curb and closely monitor the formation of political organisations, and also because the Hungarian economy was more agrarian.⁸² A loose organisation of trade unions, with a small, politically active socialist party was

⁸¹ J. Beneš, *Workers and Nationalism: Czech and German Social Democracy in Habsburg Austria, 1890-1918*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 190.

⁸² P. C. van Duin, *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009, p. 41; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 379.

nevertheless formed to engage with the working-class population of rapidly growing cities such as Budapest.⁸³ The Hungarian socialist movement in the capital often co-operated with the minority nationality parties in demonstrations for universal suffrage: reform that would ostensibly strengthen the influence of both political movements within the Hungarian state.⁸⁴ Slovak socialists were active predominantly in the city of Pressburg in Upper Hungary, where an expansion of industry including the Nobel dynamite factory attracted an influx of Slovak-speaking workers from the surrounding countryside.⁸⁵ Both Slovak and German-speaking socialist organisation in the city was greatly influenced by the imperial capital of Vienna, less than forty miles away, whose large socialist movement served as a greater source of strategic inspiration and material aid for socialists in Pressburg than the distant city of Budapest.⁸⁶ The first Slovak-language, socialist newspaper, *Nová Doba* (New Times), was set up in Pressburg in 1897 with the assistance of František Tupý, a Czech socialist from Bohemia who acted as its publisher.⁸⁷ When the Hungarian government expelled Tupý, together with other Austrian socialists, from its territory in the following year, the newspaper soon ceased publication.⁸⁸ Slovak socialists later succeeded in establishing a newspaper in Pressburg from 1904 entitled *Slovenské Robotnícké Noviny* (The Slovak Workers' News) with the help of funds from the Czech Social Democratic party based in Vienna.⁸⁹

⁸³ van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 92-93.

⁸⁴ SNA, O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 23, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 351, 'Hlasizmus IV: list Antona Štefánka', 'Socializmus a hlasizmus', 332/23; A. Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848-1914*, Washington D. C.: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2000, p. 292.

⁸⁵ van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 89,

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12; p. 143.

⁸⁷ V. Žbirková, 'Prvé slovenské robotnícké časopisy - významný prameň začiatkov slovenskej marxistickej pedagogiky', *Pedagogika*, 28 (1976), Prague: Československá akademie věd., p. 275-276

⁸⁸ *Idem*; van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 134.

⁸⁹ Van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 135.

Within a few years this network of Czech-Slovak socialist contacts had been extended to the United States. With the aid of funds collected through *Slovenské Robotnícké Noviny*, organised by the newspaper's editor Emanuel Lehocký, the first lasting Slovak American socialist newspaper was set up in Chicago in 1906.⁹⁰ Entitled *Rovnost Ludu* (Equality of the People), its editor Ján Matlocha soon became a significant voice within the Slovak national movement in the United States, representing a small Slovak socialist group in the United States.⁹¹ His organ agitated in support of 'Czecho-Slav Social Democratic Party' - a branch of the socialist movement that was active among Czech and Slovak workers in Chicago - as well as a Czech and Slovak 'Workers' Sokol' organisation to compete with the secular nationalist and clerical forms of the gymnastic group in the United States.⁹² In Chicago, as much as in Pressburg, the proximity of a relatively stronger Czech socialist movement played a crucial role in supporting their Slovak counterparts - an experience that generally left both groups well-disposed towards political cooperation.

The influence of Czech social democracy on their Slovak counterparts can be clearly identified in the latter's approach to the 'national question' within the Hungarian social democratic movement. Slovak socialist activities in Pressburg fell within the remit of the 'West Hungarian' branch of the Hungarian social democratic party, as the organisation was divided according to the map of Hungary rather than

⁹⁰ K. Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy v Amerike*, Cleveland, OH: First Catholic Slovak Union, 1970, p. 105-106.

⁹¹ The first congress of Slovak socialists in the United States was held in Cleveland in May 1911. Balch Institute-HSP, 'National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)', Box 2, *Robotnícky Kalendár 1914*, Ružomberok: Ján Párička, 1913, p. 43.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 154-156, p. 205.

on a principle of nationality.⁹³ The West Hungarian branch of the party therefore contained Slovak, German and Magyar-speaking socialist activists from linguistically-mixed settlements such as Pressburg within the same organisation. With the encouragement of Czech socialist leaders, however, Slovak socialists formed a 'Slovak Nationality Committee' in 1904 that called for a reorganisation of the Hungarian social democratic party.⁹⁴ The Slovak Committee charged that the party leadership in Budapest did not fully represent the interests of Slovak and other minority nationalities within the socialist movement, and called for the central party to allocate greater powers to nationality committees, that would coordinate socialist activity within the Slovak, German and Magyar national groups respectively.⁹⁵ When the Budapest party leadership rejected the Slovak Nationality Committee's demand for greater autonomy, Slovak activists held a conference consisting of more than forty delegates - including three Czech and one Hungarian socialist representatives - that backed the creation of an autonomous Slovak social democratic party in June 1905.⁹⁶ This attempt foundered, however, as the major trade unions followed the line of the central Hungarian party in refusing to recognise the splinter organisation. This act denied the Slovak party the union fees that it needed to function; Slovak activists therefore re-joined the Hungarian social democratic party within a year.⁹⁷

The general grievances of the Slovak socialist leadership against the central party included a perceived lack of representation within the Hungarian social democrats' executive committee. Only one Slovak-speaking social democrat held a

⁹³ van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 92.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁹⁷ *Idem.*

post on this committee from the 1890s until the First World War.⁹⁸ While the Hungarian social democrats' manifesto called for the full implementation of the Nationalities' Law of 1868, Slovak socialists believed that the central leadership was in fact comfortable with the prospect of Magyarisation in Hungary.⁹⁹ An incendiary editorial in the first edition of *Robotnické Noviny* declared in October 1904 that, in the eyes of the Budapest leadership, 'the sooner the workers of the different nationalities in Hungary were Magyarised, the more pleased it would be'.¹⁰⁰ Slovak socialist leaders like Emanuel Lehocký objected to this passive approach to Magyar language assimilation. This was partly due to their own status as Slovak-speakers within a nationalising state, but also on the practical grounds of seeking to reach workers who did not, and would not for the foreseeable future, speak - far less read - Magyar. A 1910 editorial in Lehocký's newspaper described how an ordinary Slovak worker of Upper Hungary 'goes to a school where he is instructed in a language he does not understand, and as a result he is mentally blunted. In his youth, he learns very little of the Magyar language, and not much more during the rest of his life. He has no technical or other schools where he could further educate himself in a comprehensible language; he cannot go to a Magyar school, because most of the lectures he would not understand'.¹⁰¹ From the perspective of Lehocký and other Slovak socialist leaders, the dramatic decline of Slovak-language schooling in Hungary and the need within their own party for Slovak-language literature, lectures and public education to appeal to the workforce meant that they possessed a shared

⁹⁸ van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 134.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁰ *Slovenské Robotnické Noviny*, 1 Oct. 1904, p. 1, quoted in van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 135.

¹⁰¹ *Slovenské Robotnické Noviny*, 22 Sep. 1910, p. 1, quoted in van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 143.

cause with Slovak nationalists. Their support for the principle of Slovak nationhood did not stem from flowery exercises in nationalist rhetoric being generated from a distant group of Slovak intellectuals. For the Slovak socialist movement, support for Slovak national rights in Hungary represented the best means to develop class consciousness among the Slovak-speaking workforce in Pressburg and Budapest.

Despite lacking formal autonomy from the Hungarian Social Democratic party, Slovak socialists essentially integrated themselves as a new left-wing faction within the expanded political scope of the Slovak national movement. Co-operation between the emerging Slovak socialist organisations and Slovak nationalists first developed during their joint struggle for universal suffrage in Hungary. At a political rally held in support of the reform in Pressburg in 1905, the socialists Emanuel Lehocký and Ján Pocisk stood alongside Milan Hodža and Ferdiš Juriga from the nationalist, Slovak People's Party: the event passed a resolution calling for universal suffrage and national equality within Hungary.¹⁰² The two movements cooperated to hold a Slovak social democratic rally for universal suffrage held in the town of Ružomberok in October 1907, whose chief speaker was the Slovak nationalist politician Vavro Šrobár.¹⁰³ The event was attended by a crowd of three thousand Slovak activists from both socialist and agrarian organisations, who, according to Anton Štefánek, sung both workers songs and Slovak nationalist anthems during the proceedings.¹⁰⁴ The Slovak social democratic leadership developed a particularly warm relationship with Šrobár and the wider 'Hlasist' intellectual circle that he represented. The socialist editor Emanuel Lehocký entered into personal correspondence with Šrobár, in which Lehocký sought support regarding a series of

¹⁰² Van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 96.

¹⁰³ Štefánek, 'Socializmus a hlasizmus', 332/23.

¹⁰⁴ Idem.

attacks made on the socialist movement by Juriga and other Catholic, Slovak nationalists.¹⁰⁵ In other letters between these prominent socialist and Hlasist leaders, Šrobár was invited to contribute articles to the Slovak socialist press as well as to sit in on a meeting of Lehocký's political circle in Pressburg; Lehocký also furnished the Hlasist intellectual with a series of works written by Karl Marx.¹⁰⁶ The Slovak socialist almanac in the United States published articles from *Prúdy*, the Hlasist journal published by Šrobár before the First World War, and declared its support for Šrobár against attacks from 'Slovak Jesuits': in other words, Catholic nationalists who criticised his anticlerical views.¹⁰⁷ Reviewing Šrobár's book published on the topic of public health in Upper Hungary, a writer in the almanac observed that 'Šrobár's activity is well known to our social-democratic movement, for he has achieved more for the Slovak working-class than the entire Slovak intelligentsia put together, and much more besides that.'¹⁰⁸ The Hlasists' support for measures such as temperance and agrarian reform to alleviate the condition of the poor, their refrain from denouncing the socialist movement in Upper Hungary as well as the anticlerical attitude of prominent leaders like Šrobár meant that the faction was relatively left-wing compared to the Slovak National Party leadership and Catholic nationalists; it was therefore closest to the social democratic position among the Slovak nationalist groups. As Pieter van Duin has pointed out, Slovak social democratic cooperation with the Hlasists, who represented the most 'progressive', left-wing element of the Slovak national movement, mirrored the willingness of the Hungarian Social

¹⁰⁵ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 4, inv. č. 196, poč. č. 7, Emanuel Lehocký to Vavro Šrobár, Prešporok [Pressburg], 19 Mar. 1912, 4/763/78.

¹⁰⁶ Lehocký to Šrobár, 15 Jan. 1912, 2/763/78; Lehocký to Šrobár, 26 Feb. 1912, 3/763/78; Lehocký to Šrobár, 9 June 1912, 5/763/78.

¹⁰⁷ *Robotnícky Kalendár 1914*, p. 114, p. 188.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Democratic party to work with ‘progressive’ factions within the Magyar national movement.¹⁰⁹

Slovak socialists took this process a stage further by formally integrating themselves into the Slovak national movement on the eve of the First World War. A joint meeting between representatives of the Slovak National Party and the Slovak social democrats was held in Budapest in May 1914.¹¹⁰ Among those present at the high-level meeting included Matúš Dula, leader of the Slovak National Party following the death of Pavol Mudroň two months previously, the politician Milan Hodža, Hlasist leaders including Šrobár, and Emanuel Lehocký, who was invited to speak on behalf of the Slovak social democrats.¹¹¹ The Slovak political leaders present at the meeting approved the formation of a ‘Slovak National Council’ (*Slovenská Národná Rada*), that would articulate the ‘united will of the Slovak nation’ in its interaction with other political groups.¹¹² This Council would have consisted of Dula, as chairman of the Slovak National Party, and eight other members who would have represented each of the factions within the Slovak national movement. This included the traditional, intellectual base of the Slovak National Party leadership in Martin; the Hlasist faction, whose leaders were all present at the Budapest meeting, and the Catholic nationalist faction: although its leaders did not attend the meeting.¹¹³ Significantly, as Slovak social democrats had ‘claimed the right to joint action in matters of the national interest’, their leadership was also granted ‘proportional representation in the National Council’, subject to Lehocký’s

¹⁰⁹ Van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, p. 133.

¹¹⁰ SNA, O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 206, poč. č. 81, ‘Zápisnica z porady členov slovenského národného strany a sociálneho demokratického strany v Budapešti, 26.5.1914’, Budapest, 25 May 1914, 174/9.

¹¹¹ Idem.

¹¹² ‘Zápisnica z porady členov slovenského národného strany a sociálneho demokratického strany v Budapešti’, 175/9.

¹¹³ Idem.

support for the scheme being upheld by the larger group of Slovak social democratic activists.¹¹⁴ The formation and activities of the Slovak National Council were halted by the outbreak of the First World War just a few months later, but the discussions held by various Slovak political leaders in Budapest in May 1914 demonstrate that the Slovak social democrats were considered as part of the wider Slovak national movement. Slovak social democrats did not merge their political organisations with the Slovak National Party, nor advocated for radical political change within that chief nationalist party, as the Hlasists had done so. They established themselves as a political group that was largely autonomous from their central socialist party in Budapest and distinct from the Slovak nationalist parties, but also committed itself to the achievement of Slovak nationalist goals in Hungary. With an estimated readership of eight thousand in Upper Hungary, the Slovak socialist press offered a new means of promoting Slovak ‘national consciousness’ and supporting the political agitation of the Slovak national movement to a working-class audience.¹¹⁵

Transatlantic ‘Progressive’ Nationalism and the Slovak National Movement, 1900-1914

The progressive wing of the Slovak national movement also established close transatlantic ties in the final years before the First World War: allowing this numerically small group of leaders to gain substantial influence within the Slovak National Party. Progressive leaders in Upper Hungary set out their pre-war agenda in political journals such as *Hlas* and *Prúdy*, as well as in liberal Slovak newspapers

¹¹⁴ ‘Zápisnica z porady členov slovenského národného strany a sociálneho demokratického strany v Budapešti’, 175/9.

¹¹⁵ E. Mannová, (ed.), *A Concise History of Slovakia*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000, p. 226.

that were edited by the likes of Milan Hodža (*Slovenský týždenník*) and Anton Štefánek (*Slovenský denník*) respectively.¹¹⁶ This current of thought also developed within the Slovak migrant colony in the United States. From around 1900, some of the more liberal leaders of the Slovak American community such as Peter Rovnianek had echoed some of the criticism of the conservative SNP leadership that was put forward by a new generation of ‘Hlasist’, liberal nationalists in Upper Hungary. These Slovak leaders on both sides of the Atlantic placed sufficient pressure on the party to enter parliamentary politics in Hungary until the outbreak of war. The cause of liberal nationalism was promoted within the Slovak American community by the *Slovenský Denník* (The Slovak Daily) newspaper, which was created by Rovnianek in 1901 and edited by the progressive journalist Ignác Gessay,¹¹⁷ This commercial and politically liberal newspaper achieved a circulation of some twenty-five thousand within the Slovak American colony: which placed it alongside the largest fraternal society newspapers in terms of its readership.¹¹⁸ Rovnianek’s influence in support of a more progressive form of nationalism was however brought to an end by the collapse of his wider business empire and in 1910 the *Slovenský Denník* ceased publication.¹¹⁹

The progressive nationalist agenda continue to be pressed however by the Slovak Sokol gymnastic organisation in the United States, that had eight thousand members in the pre-war period.¹²⁰ The Slovak Sokol was a stridently nationalistic organisation; its leadership declared the purpose of the group to be ‘the bodily and

¹¹⁶ SNA, O. F. Fedor Houdek, č. šk. 4, inv. č. 129, poč. č. 169, Anton Štefánek to Fedor Houdek, Budapest, 22 Sep. 1911, 664/4.

¹¹⁷ Pavelcová, ‘Ignáca Gessaya’, p. 41.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹¹⁹ HSWPA, Getting Family Papers, Box 4, Folder 3, M. Getting (trans. M. P. Getting), ‘American Slovaks and the Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept During the Years 1914-1918, Part I’, [1933/trans. 1990], f. 1.

¹²⁰ *Slovenský Sokol*, [Passaic, NJ], 15 Nov. 1912, p. 5.

spiritual upbringing of the nation, and to support all good endeavours of the Slovak nation and Slavdom as a whole'.¹²¹ Sokol also promoted secularism, declaring that:

if we wish to fulfil our national mission faithfully, the Sokol cannot recognise, distinguish, divide or cast aside any Catholic, Protestant, socialist or non-believer; our society must view only the sum of these parts and treat each other exclusively as our brother Slovaks [...] The Sokol must unite all sections of our nation so that no part of its strength is lost, but rather be applied for the universal benefit of the Slovak people'.¹²²

As political Catholicism developed as an important feature of the Slovak national movement on both sides of the Atlantic, Sokol officers denounced the clerical faction for 'leading the people on a course towards sectarian strife'.¹²³ This emphasis on secular, rather than religious, forms of organisation aligned the Sokol with the efforts of Slovak American leaders like Peter Rovnianek, who encouraged the group to continue its work that 'have borne fruit in such a short period of time' within the migrant colony.¹²⁴ The Slovak Sokol also published its own newspaper, that from 1910 was edited by the liberal and anticlerical Slovak nationalist journalist Milan Getting.¹²⁵ Getting had emigrated from Upper Hungary to the United States in 1902 and had soon become an organiser of Sokol groups in the Pittsburgh area; he then moved his family to New York to run the organisations' newspaper organ, published in the neighbouring state of New Jersey.¹²⁶ Under Getting's stewardship the *Slovenský Sokol* newspaper became a prominent supporter of a liberal and nationalist agenda in the Slovak American community.

¹²¹ *Slovenský Sokol*, [Allegheny, PA], 15 Feb. 1909, p. 4.

¹²² *Slovenský Sokol*, 30 Dec. 1909, p. 2.

¹²³ *Slovenský Sokol*, 28 Feb. 1910, p. 5.

¹²⁴ *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Aug. 1909, p. 6.

¹²⁵ HSWPA, Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, N. C. Getting, 'Milan Alexander Getting', [1982], f. 5.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 2-5.

The Slovak Sokol organisation was an important source of progressive Slovak nationalist leaders before the First World War. This institution was key to the political organisation of Slovak progressive nationalists because its leadership operated within both the circle of Slovak nationalist groups in the United States and the transatlantic network of Sokol organisations. The Sokol gymnastic movement was formed of distinct branches according to nationality, of which the Czech Sokol group was by far the largest in terms of membership in both the United States and Europe.¹²⁷ Czech Sokol groups that had already been established in the United States by a previous generation of migrants from Europe often provided crucial material support for the creation of similar groups among the new wave of Slovak-speaking migrants. In the larger cities of New York and Chicago for example, the Slovak Sokol groups often used Czech gymnastic halls and exercise instructors to conduct their regular meetings.¹²⁸ In his account of the wartime Czechoslovak independence movement, Milan Getting described how this regular contact between Czech and Slovak groups in some localities fostered ‘an awareness of Czechoslovak mutuality of racial interests’ - that these Sokol leaders believed that their nationalist political causes in Austria-Hungary were tied to one another.¹²⁹ The secular and often anticlerical nationalism of the Czech Sokol movement likely reinforced this tendency among their Slovak counterparts in the United States, contributing to the hostility of Sokol leaders towards organisations based on religious identity within the migrant colony.

¹²⁷ The Czech Sokol organisation had over 78,000 members in 1910, of a total 120,000 members in the Sokol movement in Europe. See C. E. Nolte, ‘All for One! One for All! The Federation of Slavic Sokols and the Failure of Neo-Slavism’, in P. M. Judson and M. L. Rozenblit (eds.), *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005, p. 132.

¹²⁸ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept, Part I’, f. 3.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 4.

The transatlantic network of Sokol networks allowed progressive Slovak nationalists to establish close ties with both their counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic and the Czech nationalist movement in Austria-Hungary. This was brought about by the regular participation of Slovak American Sokol leaders in the mass public rallies of the global Sokol movement, known as the *slet*, which were routinely held in Prague. As the Sokol movement in Upper Hungary had been subdued by the Hungarian government and had almost no following in the ‘old country’ before 1918, Slovak groups in the United States sent delegations to Prague in order to represent their national branch of the movement.¹³⁰ After participating in the Prague *slet*, these Slovak American delegations toured the ‘old country’, where they participated in cultural events of the Slovak National Party in the town of Martin, and visited their places of birth.¹³¹ These activities led several members of the Slovak Sokol delegation of 1907 to fall foul of the local Hungarian authorities. In the most high-profile case, one of the delegates was jailed for seven months after printing two hundred copies of a Slovak folk song, which were distributed among the townspeople of Ružomberok, and for having urged a group of Slovak friends in a tavern ‘to battle for their Slovak language and their rights’ and ‘to vote for a Slovak candidate in the local county elections’.¹³² Another two delegates were held without charge and had their travel documents permanently confiscated by Hungarian officials before they returned to the United States.¹³³ Undeterred, the Slovak Sokol group sent another group of gymnasts to participate in the Prague *slet* of July 1912, in which an estimated twenty thousand Sokol members took part in exercises in front

¹³⁰ *Slovenský Sokol*, 30 Nov. 1907, p. 4.

¹³¹ *Slovenský Sokol*, 30 July 1907, p. 4; Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept, Part I’, f. 1.

¹³² *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Dec. 1907, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 15 Feb. 1908, p. 4; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, p. 321.

¹³³ *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Feb. 1908, p. 4.

of some 150,000 spectators.¹³⁴ The Slovak American delegation also included officeholders of the Sokol organisation, including Milan Getting, who used the opportunity to take stock of the political conditions of Austria-Hungary and the increasingly divided nature of the Slovak national movement.¹³⁵ While the gymnastic squad took part in the annual Slovak nationalist celebrations in Martin, Sokol officials also met with many of the leading members of the progressive faction within the national movement: including the journalists at the new journal *Prúdy* and the group of Hlasist writers in Budapest, including Anton Štefánek and Milan Hodža.¹³⁶ The participation of Slovak American Sokol groups in the regular gatherings of the gymnastic movement in Prague therefore served a broader purpose than the mass exercises themselves. Tours by Slovak Sokol delegates like Getting helped these liberal nationalists to ascertain their like-minded counterparts among Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary. In the same way, Hlasist writers and politicians in Upper Hungary identified suitable political allies within the Slovak American community to support their common goals.

The joint effort conducted by progressive nationalist factions on both sides of the Atlantic was furthered by the creation of a new liberal newspaper in the United States. This new title was a result of the 1912 visit of the Slovak Sokol delegation to Europe and its establishment of closer ties with the Hlasist political faction in the ‘old country’. As part of their trip to Europe, the Sokol delegation was also tasked by the Slovak League of America to invite a leading Slovak nationalist figure to conduct

¹³⁴ ‘A Great Athletic Meet in Prague’, *New York Times*, 21 July 1912, C4.

¹³⁵ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept, Part I’, f. 1.

¹³⁶ *Slovenský Sokol* [Passaic, NJ], 31 Aug. 1912, p. 6-7; *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Sep. 1912, p. 6; Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept, Part I’, f. 1.

a lecture tour among the Slovak migrant colony in the United States.¹³⁷ Getting and his fellow Sokol delegates chose Pavol Blaho, the Hlasist writer and Slovak nationalist MP to undertake this task. For four months during the winter of 1912-13, Blaho held dozens of public rallies among Slovak American communities from New York to Saint Louis, Missouri.¹³⁸ Blaho and the Sokol leader Milan Getting also helped to organise a new newspaper, which was financed to the sum of \$60,000 by the publisher Klement Ihriský,¹³⁹ The *New Yorkský Denník* (The New York Daily) began publication in October 1913 to promote the progressive nationalist cause within the Slovak American community.¹⁴⁰ This newspaper was from its creation a transatlantic project, undertaken by progressive nationalists in Upper Hungary and their counterparts in the United States. The Sokol officer Milan Getting wrote to Vavro Šrobár in September 1913, to ask whether the Hlasist leader could recommend a suitable correspondent for the newspaper in Upper Hungary.¹⁴¹ Getting remarked that the newspaper's first candidate for the position had been rejected for possessing 'the Martin spirit' of the conservative SNP leadership, and that the Sokol officer wished the newspaper's commentary on homeland affairs 'to run like the [*Slovenský*] *Denník* in Budapest'; in other words, promoting a progressive agenda in an agitational manner.¹⁴² Getting stressed the importance of the progressive press in the United States to the broader cause of progressive Slovak nationalism, declaring that *New Yorkský Denník* 'could have a decisive influence for all Slovaks in America and

¹³⁷ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 20, inv. č. 932, poč. č. 17, 'Zápisnica štvrtročného schôdzy hlavného úradu Slovenskej Lígy', Pittsburgh, PA, 22 Feb. 1912, 3/8/1.

¹³⁸ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 20, inv. č. 932, poč. č. 17, 'Zápisnica štvrtročného schôdzy hlavného úradu Slovenskej Lígy', Pittsburgh, PA, 30 May 1913, 8/8/1.

¹³⁹ K. Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy*, p. 85.

¹⁴⁰ Pavelcová, 'Ignáca Gessaya', p. 42; Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy*, p. 85.

¹⁴¹ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 19, inv. č. 930, poč. č. 74, Milan Getting to Vavro Šrobár, New York, 13 Sep. 1913, f. 1.

¹⁴² Idem.

could bring our reactionaries to hand'.¹⁴³ This commitment was backed up by the employment of the anticlerical journalist Ignác Gessay by the newspaper - whose battles with the Catholic press had already been conducted in the National Slovak Society's organ.¹⁴⁴ The *New Yorkský Denník* emerged as a strident agitator for a progressive form of nationalism among Slovaks living in the United States. The creation of this newspaper demonstrated how Slovak progressive leaders cooperated to a close degree on either side of the Atlantic in the pursuit of a common cause. Slovak nationalists who sought more radical nationalist agitation in Upper Hungary and who opposed the rise of the clerical nationalist faction were a small group within the transatlantic national movement; but they had firmly identified the need to provide mutual support to fulfil their goals on opposite sides of the Atlantic.

Czechoslovak Reciprocity and Transatlantic Slovak Nationalism, 1900-1914

The final transatlantic element of Slovak nationalist agenda before the First World War involved closer political cooperation with Czech nationalist groups. This feature has become known as 'Czechoslovak reciprocity' - a term that expresses a loose set of largely cultural, economic and educational projects to promote the cause of Slovak nationalism by their Czech counterparts.¹⁴⁵ An organisation named *Československá Jednota* ('Czechoslav Union') was formed in the 1890s by a sympathetic faction of the Czech-speaking academics, political and business leaders to subsidise Slovak-language literature, to provide scholarships for the Slovak students to study in Czech-language schools and to promote the activities of the growing Czech banking sector

¹⁴³ Milan Getting to Vavro Šrobár, New York, 13 Sep. 1913, f. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Pavelcová, 'Ignáca Gessaya', p. 42.

¹⁴⁵ Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 45; Maxwell, 'Choosing Slovakia', f. 324-325.

in Upper Hungary.¹⁴⁶ In the mid-1900s, the organisation further established a ‘Czechoslovak Committee’ of largely Prague-based academics and business leaders who directed financial aid to Slovak nationalist politicians and newspaper publishers in Upper Hungary.¹⁴⁷ Annual conferences on the idea of ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ were held at the town of Luhačovice in Moravia from the 1900s. These events brought together the leadership of Czechoslav Union with Slovak nationalists from Upper Hungary - the latter consisting chiefly of the Hlasist faction, with a more limited involvement from the Slovak National Party leadership in Martin.¹⁴⁸

The ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ movement has been exclusively treated by historians as a two-way project conducted between Czech-speaking elites in the Bohemian Crown Lands with Slovak progressive nationalists in Upper Hungary. This assessment can be understood as a revisionist criticism of the great value that was placed on these Czech-Slovak links in both the early historiography and in the founding narrative of the Czechoslovak Republic from 1918. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the historian Derek Sayer in his assessment of the Czechoslovak reciprocity movement concluded that ‘the historical connections between Slovakia and the Czech lands were nonetheless more tenuous than was generally acknowledged at the time on either side’.¹⁴⁹ In order to critique the role played by ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ in the later and to a great degree unforeseen project of Czechoslovak statehood, historians have understood the movement as being an

¹⁴⁶ Maxwell, ‘Choosing Slovakia’, f. 324-325; Johnson, ‘The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle’, p. 301.

¹⁴⁷ SNA, O. F. Fedor Houdek, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 160, poč. č. 48, Československá Jednota to Fedor Houdek, Prague, 24 July 1905, 350/5; SNA, O. F. Fedor Houdek, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 161, poč. č. 3, ‘Československý pomocný komitét’ to Houdek, Prague, [Undated], 381-384/5; SNA, O. F. Fedor Houdek, č. šk. 4, inv. č. 106, poč. č. 30, Bohdan Pavlů to Houdek, Prague, 6 Nov. 1907, 642/3, 671-672/3.

¹⁴⁸ Johnson, ‘The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle’, p. 301-303.

¹⁴⁹ D. Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia: A Czech History*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 170.

‘internal’ development within the Habsburg Empire conducted by nationalist leaders operating in both halves of that state. This ‘internal’ view of the movement is shared by Western historians of Slovak nationalisms such as Alexander Maxwell and Owen Johnson, Slovak historians of the national movement like Marián Hronský as well as broader ‘Czechoslovak’ interpretations of the period by the likes of Carol Leff.¹⁵⁰ Yet the broader collection of sources used in this study clearly show that the Czechoslovak reciprocity movement was in fact transatlantic in scope rather than restricted to the interactions of nationalist factions in Austria-Hungary. Given the crucial importance of links formed between Czech and Slovak leaders outside of the Habsburg Empire in the wartime campaign for Czechoslovak statehood, the pre-war project of ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ must be viewed in its transatlantic context to evaluate the idea’s importance in bringing about the later project of common statehood.

Czech and Slovak migrant leaders in the United States provided an important source of funds for the cause of ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’. The Slovak migrant colony itself served as an important target for the campaign’s agenda. In 1910, Czech leaders in New York created the ‘Bank of Europe’ financial institution to serve as a partner organisation in the transatlantic exchange of remittances and loans between migrant organisations in the United States and Czech-owned financial institutions in the Bohemian Crown Lands.¹⁵¹ The company’s financial records show that it had

¹⁵⁰ Maxwell, ‘Choosing Slovakia’, f. 324-326, f. 335; Johnson, ‘The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle’, p. 301-303; Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 45; M. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2001, p. 38; C. S. Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia: The Making and Remaking of a State, 1918-1987*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 38.

¹⁵¹ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 18, inv. č. 904, poč. č. 6, ‘Report on the Condition of the Bank of Europe, at the Close of Business, 26. December 1912’, New York, 26 Dec. 1912, f. 1; SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 18, inv. č. 913, poč. č. 37, Bohemia Akciová Banka to Pavol Blaho, Prague, 10 Jan. 1910, f. 1.

accumulated some \$3 million in capital within the first three years of operation.¹⁵²

The Czech-American leadership received support for this project from their Slovak counterparts, including the businessman Anton Ambrose and the progressive journalist Ignác Gessay, who encouraged Slovak American savers to lend their deposits to the Bank of Europe as ‘the only Slav state bank’ in the United States.¹⁵³

The bank was chaired by Tomáš (or Thomas) Čapek, a Czech-American lawyer who had published a highly sympathetic account of the Slovak nationalist cause the previous decade and whose political activism closely followed the ideas of

Czechoslovak reciprocity between these two national movements.¹⁵⁴ The Bank of Europe’s ready access to capital, its transatlantic partnership with Czech financial groups, and its politically progressive leadership allowed it to play an important supporting role for many projects related to the ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ cause.

The bank became the chief distributor of newspapers such as *Ludové Noviny* and other Slovak nationalist organs in Upper Hungary for the Slovak readership in the United States.¹⁵⁵ The partner banks in the United States and in Prague also provided stipends to Slovak nationalist writers like Pavol Blaho to contribute articles for almanacs that were subsequently distributed to the Slovak migrant colony in the United States.¹⁵⁶ The Bank of Europe also acted as the holding agent for the funds raised by Blaho from various Slovak American individuals and organisations during his lecture tour of the United States in 1912-13, with the money then being

¹⁵² ‘Report on the Condition of the Bank of Europe’, f. 1.

¹⁵³ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 113, porad. č. 442, Anon., Letter to the Editor of the *Slovenský Denník* [Budapest], 26 July 1911, 1jd/3s, f. 1-2; *Národné Noviny*, 19 Jan. 1911, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Report on the Condition of the Bank of Europe’, f. 1. See T. Čapek, *The Slovaks of Hungary, Slavs and Pan Slavism*, New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906.

¹⁵⁵ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 21 Apr. 1911, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 18, inv. č. 913, poč. č. 37, Bohemia Akciová Banka to Pavol Blaho, Prague, 10 Jan. 1910, f. 1; Bohemia Akciová Banka to Pavol Blaho, Prague, 17 Oct. 1910, f. 2; Bohemia Akciová Banka to Pavol Blaho, Prague, 14 Jan. 1911, f. 14-15.

transferred to the bank's partner organisation.¹⁵⁷ Through the Bank of Europe, the progressive leadership of the migrant colony promoted the idea of closer economic and cultural ties between Czechs and Slovaks both in the United States and in Austria-Hungary.

Slovak American groups also helped to shape the agenda of the 'Czechoslovak reciprocity' movement. Through consultation with Slovak American leaders, an ambitious programme for educating Slovak students from Upper Hungary in the Bohemian Crown Lands was pushed forward on the eve of the First World War. The Czechoslovak Union had from the group's formation provided scholarships for Slovak students to study in Czech-language secondary schools as well as at Charles' University in Prague: by 1910 the group was funding around forty Slovak-speaking students annually.¹⁵⁸ The organisation's agenda for the 1912 conference at Luhačovice included a more ambitious project: to establish separate, 'parallel' secondary schools for Slovak-speaking students, to be based in Moravia.¹⁵⁹ This idea was taken up by Slovak supporters of 'Czechoslovak reciprocity' from both sides of the Atlantic. The Luhačovice conference in 1912 was attended not only by the typical grouping of progressive Slovak nationalists from Upper Hungary, but also by the Slovak Sokol delegation from the United States, as part of their wider tour following the *slet* in Prague held earlier in the summer.¹⁶⁰ The Sokol delegate and

¹⁵⁷ Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 114, por. č. 446, Bank of Europe to Pavel Lovás, New York, 12 Mar. 1913, f. 1; Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 114, por. č. 447, Pavol Blaho to Pavel Lovás, New York, 5 Feb. 1913, f. 1; O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 18, inv. č. 904, poč. č. 6, Bank of Europe to Pavol Blaho, New York, 21 Nov. 1913, f. 1.

¹⁵⁸ O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 12, inv. č. 632, poč. č. 41, Jozef Rotnágľ to Pavol Blaho, Prague, 18 Oct. 1910, f. 1; SNA, O. F. Fedor Houdek, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 160, poč. č. 48, Ústředný Výbor Československé Jednoty to Fedor Houdek, Prague, 2 Dec. 1911, 323-324/5.

¹⁵⁹ O. F. Fedor Houdek, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 160, poč. č. 48, Ústředný Výbor Československé Jednoty to Fedor Houdek, Prague, 1 May 1912, 325/5; O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 337, poč. č. 7, Ústředný Výbor Československé Jednoty to Vavro Šrobár, Prague, 1 May 1912, 40/881/13.

¹⁶⁰ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept, Part I', f. 1, f. 8.

journalist Milan Getting was already aware of the conference aims, having met with leading members of the Czechoslovak Union organisation such as the Czech banker Rudolf Pilát while in Prague.¹⁶¹ Following discussion of the project at Luhačovice, securing the approval and financial support of Slovak American groups for these ‘parallel’ schools formed the chief purpose of the American lecture tour conducted by the progressive nationalist MP Pavol Blaho and organised by Getting and the Slovak League of America from November 1912.¹⁶² Blaho set out his case for setting up Slovak middle schools in Moravia to the Slovak American public during his lecture tour, and sought to enlist the support of the Slovak League of America at an extraordinary meeting of the organisation, held in the Bohemian National Hall in New York in March 1913.¹⁶³ The minutes of the event show that some migrant leaders wished to prioritise the creation of Slovak-language schools for the second generation of migrants in the United States rather than institutions for Slovak students living in Europe.¹⁶⁴ Blaho, however, argued against this principle, declaring his view that ‘the ground is not yet prepared’ for Slovak-American schools.¹⁶⁵ He called on the leadership of the migrant colony to instead ‘attend to the source from which will spring the future intelligentsia of the nation’: the Slovak youth living in Upper Hungary, who, if properly reared, could also provide teachers for the second generation of Slovaks living in the United States.¹⁶⁶ This argument won sufficient support among Slovak League members, who approved the creation of a ‘Schools

¹⁶¹ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept, Part I’, f. 8.

¹⁶² F. Vrábel, ‘Zo Života Slovenských Vystažovalcov do U.S.A. pred Prvou Svetovou Vojnou’, in D. Zemančík and Z. Pavelcová (eds.) *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 30, 2013, p. 221.

¹⁶³ The building still exists today, and is located on East 73rd Street on Manhattan Island, New York. O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 20, inv. č. 932, poč č. 17, ‘Zápisnica mimoriadnej schôdzky Slovenskej Lígy’, New York, 31 Mar. 1913, 5/8/1.

¹⁶⁴ Idem.

¹⁶⁵ Idem.

¹⁶⁶ Idem.

Fund' of which one half of the funds would go to create Slovak-language schools in in Moravia, with the other half being used to support Slovak students living in the United States.¹⁶⁷ The fund-raising exercise for these projects was popularised by the slogan 'Away from the Magyar schools!' (*Preč od madarskej školy!*), a theme that played on the Slovak nationalist grievance about the 'Magyarisation' of the education system in Upper Hungary.¹⁶⁸ One sympathetic Slovak American writer wrote to Blaho stating that it seemed to him that 'the effects of this slogan [would] provide a greater guarantee of the future of the Slovak nation, than having fully fifteen Slovak delegates sitting in the Hungarian Parliament'.¹⁶⁹ By the summer of 1913, Blaho's tour had raised more than \$5000 for the project of Slovak parallel schools through collections, newspaper campaigns and donations awarded by Slovak fraternal organisations.¹⁷⁰

In the following year, the Slovak League put forward its own proposal in the spirit of Czechoslovak reciprocity, supporting the creation of a larger institute of Slovak colleges (*alumnát*) in the Moravian city of Brno/Brünn¹⁷¹, that would provide religious teaching for Catholic priesthood and Lutheran ministry as well as technical and commercial education.¹⁷² The Slovak League of America established a 'Schools Committee' to oversee the management of this institute in concert with a European-based committee, with the League's President Albert Mamatey encouraging Slovak and Czech supporters of this project to meet at Luhačovice or Martin to establish this

¹⁶⁷ 'Zápisnica mimoriadnej schôdzky Slovenskej Lígy', New York, 31 Mar. 1913, 7/8/1; SNA, Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, poč. č. 487, 'Korešpondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920', Circular of Albert Mamatey to Slovak American Newspaper Editors, Braddock, PA, 18 Apr. 1914, f. 1.

¹⁶⁸ 'Zápisnica mimoriadnej schôdzky', 6/8/1.

¹⁶⁹ O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 50, inv. č. 1679, poč. č. 92, 'Listy od krajanov, spolku v U.S.A.', L. Kozar to Pavol Blaho, Middletown, PA, 4 June 1913, f. 18.

¹⁷⁰ 'Zápisnica štvrtročného schôdzy Slovenskej Lígy', 30 May 1913, 8/8/1.

¹⁷¹ The city's name in the Czech and German languages respectively.

¹⁷² Mamatey to Slovak American Newspaper Editors, f. 1-2.

body in a letter circulated in July 1914.¹⁷³ The outbreak of the First World War stopped these projects from being pursued further or coming to fruition; but they demonstrate that Slovak American support played a key role in both funding and shaping the agenda of the ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ movement. Rather than being an agenda pursued solely by a fraction of the Czech and Slovak national leaders in Austria-Hungary, by the eve of war the political weight of the Slovak League of America had been added in favour of taking Slovak students ‘away from the Magyar schools’ in Upper Hungary and teaching them in the Slovak language in neighbouring Moravia.

The last feature of the ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ movement was the idea of a political union between the Bohemian Crown Lands and Upper Hungary, as set out by prominent supporters of the movement on the eve of the First World War. This has been a highly contested subject within the existing historiography, as the efforts of the Czechoslovak reciprocity movement and its leaders were promoted by its statesmen and sympathetic historians alike as one of the many founding myths of the interwar Czechoslovak state.¹⁷⁴ As a more recent generation of revisionist historians have challenged the means by which a Czechoslovak state came into existence, the role of the ‘Czechoslovak reciprocity’ movement as a unifying factor between the Czech and Slovak national movements in Austria-Hungary has been played down accordingly.¹⁷⁵ Carol Leff, for example, argues that the Czechoslovak reciprocity movement in Austria-Hungary consisted of ‘a budding economic sidelight but no

¹⁷³ Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, poč. č. 487, ‘Korespondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920’, Circular of Albert Mamatey to Slovak American Leaders, Pittsburgh, PA, 15 July 1914, f. 1.

¹⁷⁴ E. Bosák, ‘Slovaks and Czechs: An Uneasy Existence’, in H. G. Skilling (ed.), *Czechoslovakia, 1918-1988: Seventy Years from Independence*, Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991, p. 65.

¹⁷⁵ A. Orzoff, *The Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914-1948*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 11, p. 13.

overt political content'.¹⁷⁶ This outlook is shared by Alexander Maxwell, who locates a cultural 'Czechoslovak reciprocity' movement in contrast to a political, 'Hungaro-Slavic' nationalist outlook held by Slovak nationalist leaders.¹⁷⁷ Maxwell judges that while 'many participants played important roles in the first Czechoslovak government [...] *Československá Jednota* [Czechoslav Union] explicitly and deliberately excluded political activism from its aims: it saw itself as a cultural organization'.¹⁷⁸ These arguments can, however, be contested by the activities documented in this study. The financial support offered by the Czechoslav Union to the Slovak-language press in Upper Hungary for example was an indirect form of political support to the Slovak national movement. The newspapers that received funds such as *Ludové Noviny* and the Slovak National Party's own organ were nationalist and political newspapers, to which sympathetic writers towards the aims of Czechoslovak reciprocity such as Pavol Blaho contributed as well as clerical nationalist leaders like Ferdiš Juriga. The Czechoslav Union did not select these titles for support due to their engaging cultural debate or demonstration of good Slovak grammar, but rather for the political ideas that these titles sought to propagate among their readers. The idea of setting up 'parallel' schools in Moravia for Slovak students also engaged with one of the chief practical grievances of Slovak nationalists with the state administration in Upper Hungary: the state's promotion of education in the Magyar language rather than in the 'native tongue' of the Slovak-speaking section of the population. The campaign for these schools, organised by progressive leaders in the Slovak American migrant colony and led by the Slovak parliamentarian Pavol Blaho, was conducted in the terms of a nationalist political struggle. It was for this

¹⁷⁶ Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia*, p. 38.

¹⁷⁷ Maxwell, 'Choosing Slovakia', f. 325.

¹⁷⁸ Idem.

reason that one of Blaho's supporters likened agitation among Slovak Americans under the slogan 'Away from Magyar schools!' to Slovak nationalists securing a record number of seats in the Hungarian Parliament.¹⁷⁹ While both Leff and Maxwell are right to point out that groups such as the Czechoslav Union did not claim political activism, the distinction between strictly 'cultural' activities and measures of political support between the Czech and Slovak nationalist factions were not enforced in practice.

A project for the political union of Czechs and Slovaks was also developed through the 'Czechoslovak reciprocity' movement, for which the transatlantic network of contacts played a crucial role in determining the strategy and the eventual uptake of this agenda during the First World War. In May 1914, the Czech banker Rudolf Pilát, one of the chief organisers of the Czechoslav Union, set out proposals calling for 'the joining of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia [Upper Hungary] as one organisational unit of the [Habsburg] empire'.¹⁸⁰ Pilát's proposed Czechoslovak territory would have combined the Bohemian Crown Lands of imperial Austria with Upper Hungary - essentially the territories that formed the later Czechoslovak state - to make an autonomous political body alongside the remaining parts of Austria and Hungary in a federal political system.¹⁸¹ The Habsburg imperial state would therefore have consisted of three autonomous polities rather than the 'dualist' system that was in place between 1867 and 1918. Pilát did not call for the creation of an independent state, nor were his plans shared by most Czech and

¹⁷⁹ Kozar to Blaho, f. 18.

¹⁸⁰ HSWPA, Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, 'Milan Getting Sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916'. Rudolf Pilát to Milan Getting, Prague, 13 May 1914, f. 1.

¹⁸¹ Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', p. 302-303.

Slovak political leaders on the eve of the First World War.¹⁸² The Czech banker sought an alternative source of political support for this project, however, among progressive leaders in the United States. Among other letters describing the political situation in Austria-Hungary, Pilát provided the details of his proposed political union to the Slovak Sokol organisation in New York and its newspaper editor Milan Getting.¹⁸³ Pilát informed Getting about the attitude of Slovak nationalist leaders in Upper Hungary towards the idea of a political union with the Czechs, claiming that ‘Slovak leaders cannot of course openly subscribe to this idea in the press, but their support could be registered anonymously. The Martin current [of nationalist thought] [...] is against joining with Bohemia [...] [but] nearly all the young Slovak intelligentsia are for our Czechoslovak programme in body and soul’.¹⁸⁴ Pilát asserted the need for the Slovak migrant colony to bring about the political union of Czechs and Slovaks, stating that:

You have freedom in America and an unconstrained declaration from you would act as the true expression of Slovak hearts. Understand that you cannot wait for any declaration to come from Slovakia [Upper Hungary] but rather the initiative must come from yourselves and by us. Slovakia does not and will not have a [national] program any time soon; therefore, it must be [done by] American Slovaks with ourselves in Bohemia. This has been expressed to me by Blaho, Štefánek and Hodža.¹⁸⁵

Pilát’s claim that the progressive wing of the Slovak national movement in the ‘old country’ favoured political union with the Czechs was supported by a further letter sent from the Hlasist leader Anton Štefánek to Getting in June 1914.¹⁸⁶ The editor of *Slovenský Denník* in Budapest expressed to the Sokol officer his frustration that the polarised factions within the Slovak national movement were ‘unable to present a

¹⁸² Bosák, ‘Slovaks and Czechs’, p. 72.

¹⁸³ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept’, f. 8-10.

¹⁸⁴ Pilát to Getting, f. 1.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 2.

¹⁸⁶ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept’, f. 36.

united front against the Magyar Government' in Hungary.¹⁸⁷ Štefánek stated his conviction that Slovaks 'are endeavouring in the direction of joining the Czech [sic] crown lands, Moravia and Silesia, and Slovakia into a single autonomous entity. This is our objective, which can only be realised after the death of our current King [Franz Josef]'.¹⁸⁸ Štefánek was in truth speaking for his own small, ideological faction rather than for the Slovak national movement as a whole on this matter; but he further confirmed his support by declaring that a political union with the Bohemian Crown Lands was 'the only potentially successful undertaking' for Slovak political activism in Upper Hungary.¹⁸⁹ The project of a political union between Czechs and Slovaks therefore had not only a strategy for agitating among Slovak migrant organisations in the United States, but also political support from leading members of the progressive faction of Slovaks in the 'old country'. This was made possible by the partnership of sympathetic Czech national leaders with Slovak progressives on both sides of the Atlantic through the 'Czechoslovak reciprocity' movement.

On the eve of the First World War, Slovak progressive leaders in the United States were being urged by counterparts in the 'Czechoslovak reciprocity' movement to agitate for a Czecho-Slovak political union in the migrant colony. Their goal was to secure support for this project by the Slovak League of America in place of the consent of the Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary. In similar correspondence, the Czechoslovak Union official Rudolf Pilát also encouraged Slovak progressive leaders 'to increase contacts with Czech American circles to propagate our ideas', judging that it was 'necessary to cultivate Czechoslovak togetherness not only here, but also in America' to achieve the political union of these two national

¹⁸⁷ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 40.

¹⁸⁸ Idem.

¹⁸⁹ Idem.

movements in Europe.¹⁹⁰ In his later memoirs on the emergence of the campaign for Czechoslovak statehood in the United States, Getting judged Pilát's letter of May 1914 'a historically crucial document, because it was the last exhaustive letter [before the outbreak of war] about conditions in Slovakia and the Dual Monarchy... and eventually led us on the road to find Masaryk'.¹⁹¹ It is also a highly significant document to this study of transatlantic Slovak nationalism. The Czech banker Rudolf Pilát's suggestion that the Slovak League of America ought to declare in favour of a political union with the Czechs - ostensibly on behalf of a divided national leadership in the 'old country' - is important because this plan was mooted in May 1914 when Europe was still at peace. The idea that Slovak Americans ought to campaign for national liberation on behalf of their compatriots living in Upper Hungary was therefore not an outcome of the First World War; through the network of progressive Czech and Slovak leaders established by the movement for 'Czechoslovak reciprocity', this plan had already been transplanted to progressive Slovak leaders in the United States before the conflict began.

Conclusion

The tension between the 'all-national' and 'factional' elements within the transatlantic Slovak national movement explain the apparent rise and steep decline of Slovak national politics in Upper Hungary before the First World War. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Slovak organisations in Upper Hungary and the United States were capable of putting their ideological differences aside for a

¹⁹⁰ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 10.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., f. 36.

common nationalist purpose. Some of the most striking results of this collective effort included the electoral breakthrough for Slovak nationalist candidates in the 1906 parliamentary elections in Hungary, and the creation of the Slovak League of America as the umbrella political organisation for Slovak migrant groups in the following year. Yet, as this chapter has shown, when the momentum of this collective effort was spent, the ideological differences and heated personal rivalries between Slovak national leaders came to the fore. The failure of Slovak nationalists to gain political influence in Hungary through parliamentary politics, followed by their major electoral defeat in 1910, produced the environment in which factional conflicts erupted to an unprecedented degree among Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary. By the eve of the First World War this had led clerical nationalists to form a separate Slovak People's Party, distinct from the rest of the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary. These factional disputes were played out in the highly agitational Slovak American press and between leading Slovak American organisations, but it was the division among Slovak national leaders in Upper Hungary that played the decisive role in the decline of collective nationalist projects before the war.

The Slovak American colony had always been split between secular and religious fraternal organisations and between progressive and conservative agitators in its political press since the formation of its nationwide institutions in the early 1890s. Indeed, the early history of Slovak organisational life in the United States could be described as largely a story of bitter personal feuds and the incessant struggles between fraternal societies as well as other organisations. Yet this feature of the migrant colony did not prevent the resources of Slovak American groups being

mobilised for all forms of Slovak nationalist projects in the 'old country' during the 1900s. By contrast, the schism within the Slovak national coalition in Upper Hungary on the eve of the First World War undermined the basis of collective Slovak nationalist agitation on both sides of the Atlantic. The goal of achieving Slovak national rights was therefore upheld by increasingly independent political groups representing a diverse set of social and economic visions on the eve of the First World War. The response of Slovak national leaders to the outbreak of that war and their expression of the political goals of their national movement reflected this tension. A collective Slovak national programme in wartime could be created only by submerging many of the personal and ideological divisions that were held by Slovak political leaders during the final peacetime years of the Hungarian state. These crucial pre-war tensions would however return to shape the course of Slovak national politics within the successor state of Czechoslovakia.

Chapter 6: ‘Away from Hungary!’ Slovak Nationalism in the United States and the Campaign for Czecho-Slovak Statehood, 1914-1918

The declaration of the First World War in the summer of 1914 severed, without warning, the most critical links between the two centres of Slovak national life in Upper Hungary and the United States. In one of the first hostile acts of the conflict, the underwater telegraph cables forming the physical link between Austria-Hungary and the United States were cut by the British navy, preventing at a stroke effective communication to and from the ‘old country’.¹ The intensive, two-way flow of migrants between the United States and the ‘old country’ soon met the same fate. While over twenty-five thousand Slovak-speaking migrants arrived in the United States in 1914, they were followed by two thousand compatriots in the following year and just thirty-five by 1918.² While communication between Upper Hungary and the Slovak migrant colony was restored in the autumn through neutral telegraph cables, the phenomenon of mass and largely unrestricted Slovak migration did not return even after the war’s end. The war therefore placed many ordinary Slovak-speakers in unanticipated and difficult circumstances.

For an estimated one hundred thousand migrant workers, the goal of returning to the ‘old country’ with their savings was indefinitely postponed until both the transatlantic shipping routes and the European political situation were once more

¹ *Jednota*, 26 Aug. 1914, p. 4; Balch Institute/HSP, ‘National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)’, Box 2, *Kalendárium 1915*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Národných Novín, 1915, p. 81.

² G. C. Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision: Slovak American Viewpoints towards Compatriots and the Homeland from 1914 to 1915, as Viewed by the Slovak Language Press in Pennsylvania*, London: Associated University Press, 1995, p. 35.

secured.³ A far smaller number of Slovak Americans who had taken the opportunity to visit Upper Hungary in that fateful summer found themselves in immediate danger. The Slovak American press popularised the tale of the unfortunate Reverend Pavel Šiška, a financial officer of the Slovak League of America, who upon the outbreak of the war was forcibly drafted into a Hungarian unit to serve as a military chaplain.⁴ Slovak American newspapers used Šiška's experience to warn their countrymen to avoid travelling to Hungary during wartime - even those who, like Šiška, were naturalised American citizens.⁵ Slovak-speaking migrants who remained in the United States were not, however, entirely safe from participation in the conflict, for many arrivals in the previous decade did not yet have U.S. citizenship and had completed the required military service to be considered reservists for the Austro-Hungarian army.⁶ Slovak and other Slav migrant organisations launched an immediate public campaign to prevent Austria-Hungary from conscripting these estimated 200,000 reservists in the United States.⁷ On 30 July 1914, the editors of the leading Slav newspapers in the New York region, including those of the Slovak titles *Slovák v Amerike* and *Slovenský Sokol*, released a joint statement calling on reservists to avoid enlisting to fight against the Serbian and Russian armies and declaring that they would 'consider a traitor of the Slavonic idea everyone who should, from fear or without knowledge, join the Austrian flag to fight against our own brethren'.⁸ Within days of Austria-Hungary's declaration of war, some of its most politically radical

³ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 13, inv. č. 678, poč. č. 27, Albert Mamatey to Vavro Šrobár, Pittsburgh, PA, 22 Nov. 1919, 21/156/18.

⁴ Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision*, p. 125.

⁵ Idem.

⁶ 'Reservists Await Call', *New York Times*, 28 July 1914, p. 2.

⁷ Idem.

⁸ 'Servian Editors Appeal', *New York Times*, 30 July 1914, p. 3.

former subjects had therefore set themselves decisively against the war aims of that state and against the idea of fighting to serve the interests of the Habsburg dynasty.

The sudden disconnect between Slovaks in Hungary and the United States on the outbreak of the war was also to be found in the political outlook of the national movement. In the absence of reliable communications, the Slovak American press carried reports that several nationalist leaders had been killed by court martials in Austria-Hungary, including the Slovak MP Ferdiš Juriga.⁹ The leading Catholic newspaper *Jednota* established a few weeks later that Juriga had not in fact been harmed by the authorities, but dark rumours continued to circulate about the fate of leading Slovak politicians in Hungary throughout the war.¹⁰ In August 1915, for example, Pittsburgh's *Národné Noviny* newspaper published an purported update on conditions in the old country, provided by a Czech and Slovak émigré group in Russia, in which the newspaper reported the imprisonment of many leading Slovak nationalists including Milan Hodža and Juriga, before baldly stating that 'it is also said that they have all been shot' by the Hungarian authorities.¹¹ While the Slovak American press once again corrected these erroneous reports that the Slovak clerical politician Juriga had been sent to a firing squad, its newspaper editors did not publicly account for the gap between what they were willing to believe was occurring in Upper Hungary and the actual political conditions experienced by Slovak national leaders in the old country. There was in fact no basis for Hungarian authorities or a military court martial to try Juriga: for the Slovak clerical MP had not undermined the wartime regime. In contrast, Juriga wrote a leading article of the Slovak People's Party newspaper on 15 August 1914 that declared the loyalty of

⁹ *Jednota*, 9 Sep. 1914, p. 1; *Národné Noviny*, 10 Sep. 1914, p. 1, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Jednota*, 23 Sep. 1914, p. 1.

¹¹ *Národné Noviny*, 19 Aug. 1915, p. 1.

Slovaks to the key institutions of the Habsburg state. He first emphasised the allegiance of Slovaks to the imperial dynasty, arguing that ‘over many centuries since the first Habsburgs sat on the Hungarian throne and through various crises the Slovak nation has always stood firmly for the Habsburgs’.¹² He restated the loyalty of Slovaks to Austria-Hungary and to the status of the Kingdom of Hungary within that imperial state, stating that ‘Slovaks have always recognised our Hungarian homeland (*vlast*) and the integrity of its borders as a necessary defence for our nationality’.¹³ In July 1915, Juriga’s commentary continued to focus on the patriotic support of Slovaks for the war effort of the Hungarian state, speculating that ‘perhaps our [Magyar and German] critics will abandon once and for all their belief that the Slovak language and patriotism are incompatible... When the Slovak sheds blood for King and country just the same [as them], he will be recognised in all matters as an equal child in the great family of nations in our land’.¹⁴ Juriga did not become, as the Slovak American press suggested, ‘a martyr [...] a freedom fighter [...] who has suffered heroically for truth and his convictions’ in the wartime Hungarian state. Rather, he continued to serve as a committed Slovak nationalist MP who openly declared the loyalty of the Slovak nation to the regime in Hungary and the imperial dynasty right up until the final weeks of the war.¹⁵ The Hungarian authorities were therefore innocent of the charges alleged against it in the Slovak American press. It said much, however, about the Hungarian state’s poor standing in the migrant colony that a summary execution of national leaders was considered a realistic act. Austria-

¹² *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 21 Aug. 1914, p. 1.

¹³ *Idem*.

¹⁴ *Slovenské ľudové noviny*, 9 July 1915, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Národné noviny*, 10 Sep. 1914, p. 4.

Hungary evidently could not count on the sympathy or broad support of Slovak Americans during the greatest crisis in that state's history.

The response of Slovak political organisations to the First World War was markedly different on either side of the Atlantic, an outcome that decisively changed the political goals of the Slovak national movement. Before 1914, almost all Slovak nationalist leaders sought their aim of achieving Slovak national rights strictly within the existing territorial boundaries and political institutions of the Hungarian state. By the end of Austria-Hungary's war effort in October 1918, a near universal consensus had been formed among Slovak nationalists for breaking with Hungary and joining with Czech nationalists to form a common, independent state. To achieve this end, the bulk of the territory of Upper Hungary was reconceived as 'Slovakia' (*Slovensko*) - a national homeland for Slovak-speakers that had often been referred to by nationalist leaders before the war but whose territorial limits had rarely been fleshed out. The impetus for this radical change of nationalist political goals came from Slovak nationalists in the United States rather than their counterparts in Europe, who continued to publicly express their demands within the bounds of Hungarian state. As the war progressed for months, and then years, without a decisive outcome, the political will of Slovak migrant groups and their political umbrella organisation the Slovak League of America became dominant in shaping the agenda of the Slovak national movement. This feature of Slovak political nationalism - unusual among the national movements of central and eastern Europe, even in the context of the war - ought to prompt considerable historical interest and requires explanation.

This chapter will determine why the movement for Slovak national rights combined with the demands of Czech nationalist counterparts to bring about a

common, Czechoslovak state during the First World War. First, the relative passivity of Slovak nationalist leadership in Hungary following the outbreak of the war needs to be accounted for. Historians have often viewed wartime passivity as an act of self-preservation by Slovak nationalists, in a political climate hostile to ideas of revolutionary nationalist change; or else as a largely cynical means of waiting to back the winning side in a conflict between Great Power states. But this tactic also reflected a genuine desire among many Slovak nationalists to remain part of a larger Hungarian state. Indeed, it was difficult for many Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary to envisage the demise of the centuries-old Kingdom of Hungary as an outcome of the war. Their broadly passive stance may be contrasted with the belligerent attitudes developed by Slovak nationalist leaders in the United States, ostensibly on behalf of their compatriots in Austria-Hungary. That these migrant groups and leaders readily organised to express a Slovak nationalist political programme should not be surprising; as this study has demonstrated, the Slovak American colony already played a central role in shaping the agenda and tactics of Slovak political nationalism in the final pre-war decades. Yet the question as to which political demands the wartime Slovak nationalist programme ought to include was bitterly contested by Slovak American leaders for nearly the entire duration of the European conflict. Slovak migrants were divided on many aspects of the Slovak national question - as well as other aspects of Slovak-American life - on the eve of the war. Their voicing of a collective political programme to the wider world through the Slovak League of America was therefore as difficult a cause to bring about as the better-known efforts of the so-called 'triumvirate' of Czechoslovak agitators operating in exile in western Europe - Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, Edvard Beneš, and

the Slovak-speaking aviator Milan Štefánik - to secure the support of Allied statesmen for the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary as a war aim.¹⁶

The story of how and why Slovak American leaders backed the cause of Czechoslovak statehood - with the key proviso of full autonomy for their national homeland of 'Slovakia' within that new state - involved heroic levels of fundraising, military sacrifice and continual political intrigue among officeholders of the Slovak League and other Slovak American leaders. The nationalist programme expressed by the Slovak League at the end of the First World War did not represent their settled understanding of how Slovak national rights ought to be achieved for their compatriots in Europe, but rather the outcome of a factional conflict and the political compromises that were needed to secure the cooperation of all Slovak American groups for this common cause. The 'internal' politics of the Slovak American migrant groups in wartime therefore played a key role in shaping the Czechoslovak state from 1918 and, by extension, the independent Slovak Republic that exists today.

The decisive role of Slovak American migrants in directing the wartime Slovak national movement was made possible by the passive political stance adopted by Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary. In line with declarations made by other minority nationalist parties in Hungary, the newly elected leader of the Slovak National Party, Matúš Dula, wrote to Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza in August 1914 to announce that his party would cease its political activity for the

¹⁶ T. Čapek, *The Origins of the Czechoslovak State*, New York: The Revell Press, 1926, p. 33, p. 39; V. S. Mamatey, 'The United States and Czechoslovak Independence', in N. Stone and E. Strouhal (eds.), *Czechoslovakia: Crossroads and Crises, 1918-1988*, London: MacMillan Press, 1989, p. 64-65.

duration of the war to demonstrate the Slovak nation's 'patriotic ideals'.¹⁷ The Slovak People's Party postponed significant political agitation for the same reason: as seen earlier, its sole parliamentary delegate Ferdiš Juriga declared Slovak support for the Hungarian state, the Habsburg dynasty and its collective war effort.¹⁸ Slovak nationalists did not conduct any form of popular agitation in Upper Hungary until the final few months of the war. While the Slovak political press was subject to wartime censorship, there is little evidence that the authorities had to deal with undesirable political views. A general survey of the *Slovenské Ludové Noviny* newspaper in Upper Hungary, which in the pre-war years served as the agitational organ for the Slovak People's Party, found no evidence of substantial censorship until March 1918: when an issue discussing forced requisitions by the military and other topics was subject to heavy redactions.¹⁹ The tone of the Slovak political press was significantly modified by its nationalist editors to allow these newspapers to continue publication throughout the war with few difficulties, as part of the broader passive political strategy conducted by its nationalist leadership in Hungary.

The passive stance adopted by Slovak nationalist leaders in wartime worked both for and against the interests of the Hungarian government. While ensuring that there was no immediate prospect of minority nationalist movements contributing to political unrest, the Slovak nationalists' strategy, as described by Owen Johnson, of 'withdrawing into their shell' during the war also hindered a lasting political

¹⁷ SNA, O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 206, poč. č. 81, Matuš Dula to István Tisza, Martin, [Aug 1914], 184/9; M. Pekník, 'Milan Hodža and Slovak Politics', in M. Pekník (ed.), *Milan Hodža: Statesman and Politician*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2007, p. 153.

¹⁸ Felak, 'At the Price of the Republic', p. 13.

¹⁹ *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 15 Mar. 1918, p. 1-3. This instance was soon followed by much smaller redacted passages of articles discussing voting rights in Hungary and comparing Slovak national organisation to alleged forms of cooperation among the Jewish population. See *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 22 Mar. 1918, p. 1; *Slovenské Ludové Noviny*, 5 Apr. 1918, p. 1.

settlement of their grievances with the Hungarian state.²⁰ In August 1915, the Tisza government sought to open contacts with the SNP leadership in Martin and requested a memorandum of Slovak nationalist demands.²¹ It also invited a delegation of Slovak nationalist politicians to Budapest to work out a compromise settlement between the list of Slovak demands and the government's position, with any deal contingent on the SNP publicly renouncing any form of future political cooperation with Czech nationalists, even within the Habsburg Empire.²² After considerable internal debate, the SNP leadership refused to send a delegation to negotiate with the Tisza government.²³ The decision of the SNP to rebuff Tisza's offer was likely influenced by their lack of trust in the Hungarian parliamentary leader to implement any such deal. As historian Miroslav Pekník has pointed out, another significant influence was provided by the Slovak politician and journalist Milan Hodža, who urged the party's leadership to avoid committing to any settlement within the Hungarian state's borders.²⁴ A fellow wartime national leader commented on this intervention by stating that 'Hodža says that it is a favourable time for us, that this war must bring a solution of the problem of the small nations in Europe... [SNP chairman] Dula would be satisfied with even the slightest concessions, Hodža's opinion seems like a hallucination to us'.²⁵ In the context of the summer of 1915 - with the Central Powers holding their own on most fronts of the European war and Serbia overrun - the prospect of a peace settlement affecting the nationality issues within Austria-Hungary seemed slim. Yet the passive stance of SNP in Upper

²⁰ O. V. Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938: Education and the Making of a Nation*, Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1985, p. 47.

²¹ Pekník, 'Milan Hodža and Slovak Politics', p. 158.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 159.

²³ *Idem.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159-160.

²⁵ Kornel Stodola, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Hungary was maintained in part due to their expression of patriotic support for the war as well as this calculation among Slovak politicians that it would confer tactical political advantage to their national movement as the war progressed.

While the official Slovak National Party leadership held good to their pledge of political passivity from their base in the town of Martin, circles of Slovak leaders formed elsewhere to gather political intelligence and to influence the post-war objectives of the Slovak national movement. The most important centre of wartime activity among Slovaks in Austria-Hungary was the imperial capital of Vienna, where from the first few weeks of the war Slovak nationalists held meetings at the home of Kornel Stodola to discuss the sudden disruption of political affairs.²⁶ A nationalist, described by one historian as ‘the real coordinator of Slovak politics in Vienna’, Stodola’s role in sharing information with other Slovak leaders from the imperial capital went hand in hand with a role in the imperial bureaucracy: in July 1915 he was made head of the Slovak-language department of the wartime censorship office.²⁷ His influence within that bureau soon secured the appointment of several other Slovaks to imperial censorship posts: including Hodža, whose role as censor of the Croatian press placed this nationalist politician in Vienna for the rest of the war.²⁸ The information gathered by this circle of nationalists based in the imperial capital was then shared by Stodola by his tours to meet Slovak leaders in Ružomberok such as Vavro Šrobár and Andrej Hlinka as well as the central SNP leadership in Martin.²⁹ While Slovak nationalists remained noncommittal to an

²⁶ Pekník, ‘Milan Hodža and Slovak Politics’, p. 156; V. Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko: Pamäti z Rokov, 1918-1920*, Vol. I, Prague: Čin, 1928, p. 105.

²⁷ Pekník, ‘Milan Hodža and Slovak Politics’, p. 157.

²⁸ *Idem.*

²⁹ E. Mannová, (ed.), *A Concise History of Slovakia*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2000, p. 235.

envisaged post-war nationalist agenda, they were in this way kept reasonably well informed of both imperial and international events.

The establishment of this Slovak political centre in Vienna gave its members the ability to establish contacts with the leaders of Czech political parties - particularly after the convention of the Austrian parliament (*Reichsrat*) in May 1917 brought more than one hundred Czech deputies to the capital for its regular sessions.³⁰ Efforts to incorporate the Slovak national claims into the Czech nationalist programme were also made by Slovaks based in Prague such as the Hlasist journalist Anton Štefánek and František Votruba.³¹ The extent of these Czech-Slovak links should not be exaggerated: for much of the war, the idea of combining these two distinct national programs was held only by a small number of domestic politicians on either side. The idea of incorporating the nationalist agenda of both movements into a single cause did not bear fruit in Austria-Hungary until the movement for Czecho-Slovak statehood had demonstrated its potential support among exile leaders and by the sympathy of Allied statesmen.³² What mattered most to the domestic leadership of the Slovak national movement, even into 1917, was not the achievement of a definitive post-war programme for either union with the Czechs or a political settlement with the Hungarian state, but rather that its leaders remained well informed of international events in order to determine their political stance at a later stage in the war. The decision of the SNP to adopt a passive political stance in Upper Hungary reflected the reality that any popular agitation for a specific

³⁰ P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016, p. 420.

³¹ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 8, inv. č. 567, poč. č. 5, Anton Štefánek to Vavro Šrobár, Prague, 20 Nov. 1917, f. 1-5; Mannova, *Slovakia*, p. 235.

³² Pekník, 'Milan Hodža and Slovak Politics', p. 160; A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918*, 2nd Ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, p. 265.

nationalist cause would not only be politically and personally dangerous to Slovak leaders, but would also be counterproductive to the party's strategy to await major events. The conscious effort of Slovak nationalists to establish a network of contacts across the empire gives lie to the notion that it was an entirely passive act: information was the wartime priority for Slovak national leaders and they were rather effective in securing access to this political resource. The expressions of loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty, the territorial integrity of the Hungarian state and for the war effort by the Slovak nation were - for most Slovak nationalist leaders - both prudent and authentic declarations of patriotism in this context. These considerations broadly characterised the outlook of Slovak national leaders in Upper Hungary until the Slovak national movement was mobilised for political activity in the autumn of 1918.

Slovak leaders and groups in the United States claimed for themselves the role of representing the interests of the Slovak national cause in wartime and it was in this centre of the pre-war national movement where the bulk of wartime political activity took place. Within just a few months of the outbreak of the war, a declaration of Slovak political demands was published by the Slovak League of America, representing all the major Slovak fraternal organisations, societies and newspapers in the Slovak American press. This was a remarkably quick timescale for establishing a common declaration compared to other migrant groups in the United States. In contrast, the numerically larger community of Czechs living in the United States did not establish a common political vision for their countrymen in Europe until July 1917: when its nationwide secular and Catholic umbrella groups finally agreed to 'close cooperation' to help establish an independent, Czecho-Slovak state.³³ The

³³ O. Odlozolik, 'The Czechs', in J. P. O'Grady (ed.), *The Immigrants' Influence on Wilson's Peace Policies*, Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1967, p. 208-209.

emergence of a common statement of political goals did not emerge until fully a year later in the case of the Carpatho-Ruthenians, a fellow national movement whose American leaders secured the incorporation of their purported national homeland in Hungary into the interwar Czechoslovak state.³⁴ One of the key reasons for the rapid mobilisation of Slovak American opinion was the central role that they had already played in their national movement in the decades before the outbreak of war. The Slovak migrant colony carried far more influence due to its financial resources, mass membership organisations and press among the relatively weak Slovak national movement than, for example, their Czech American counterparts had upon its domestic leaders in the Bohemian Crown Lands. Consequently, as Odlozolik has argued, the Czech American press and organisations did not concern themselves much with homeland political affairs before 1914; whereas this study has already shown how nationalist agitation formed one of the central features of the Slovak American press and was a cause regularly brought up among the wider leadership of organisations.³⁵

Tied to this explanation was another, and more immediate cause, for Slovak American political mobilisation: its activity formed part of a broader nationalist campaign in the Slovak-American community that was not initially concerned with international events and a European war. In the spring of 1914, Slovak groups in the United States mobilised to oppose a lecture and fundraising tour conducted by the Hungarian politician Mihály Károlyi among its substantial migrant constituencies in the United States. As Károlyi sought to win favour among a wider American audience by stressing his genuine commitment to democratic reforms in Hungary,

³⁴ J. P. O'Grady, 'Introduction', in O'Grady (ed.), *The Immigrants' Influence on Wilson's Peace Policies*, p. 18.

³⁵ Odlozolik, 'The Czechs', p. 207-208.

some of the Slovak migrant leaders sought instead to pin down the opposition leader's views on the status of the Slovak-speakers and other minority nationalities in that state.³⁶ A series of public meetings, and protests against Károlyi's visit were organised by predominantly the most radical sections of the Slovak migrant community in the United States in the spring of 1914.³⁷ Together with Czech American activists (largely fellow Sokol officials like Getting), Slovak leaders such as Getting and Jozef Baran of the *Slovák v Amerike* newspaper organised a demonstration of 3,500 protestors in New York against Károlyi's arrival on 13 April 1914.³⁸ They also secured an interview with Károlyi, from which they obtained statements that were used to enflame wider Slovak American opinion.³⁹ For while Károlyi declared his support for reforms such as universal male suffrage, he refused to recognise the right of Slovak and other non-Magyar nationalities to political autonomy within the Hungarian state.⁴⁰ Slovak American agitation against Károlyi intensified as a result of this admission, which as one historian has summarised meant that 'to the Slovaks [...] there seemed little difference between his views and those of Count Stephen [István] Tisza', the Hungarian Prime Minister, on their attitude towards nationality rights in Hungary.⁴¹ The Károlyi trip was placed on the

³⁶ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, 'Milan Getting Sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916', C. L. Orbach to Milan Getting, New York, 28 Mar. 1914, f. 1; Milan Getting to Albert Mamatey, New York, 28 Mar. 1914, f. 1.

³⁷ *Národné Noviny*, 16 Apr. 1914, p. 1; *Národné Noviny*, 23 Apr. 1914, p. 4; *Národné Noviny*, 30 Apr. 1914, p. 1; K. Čulen, (trans. D. C. Necas), *History of Slovaks in America*, St. Paul, MN: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007, p. 358, p. 362.

³⁸ Orbach to Getting, 28 Mar. 1914, f. 1; HSWPA, Getting Family Papers', Box 4, Folder 3, M. Getting (trans. M. P. Getting), 'American Slovaks and the Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept During the Years 1914-1918, Part I', [1933/trans. 1990], f. 14-16; Pavelcová, 'Ignáca Gessaya', p. 42; Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 354-355.

³⁹ HSWPA, Getting Family Papers', Box 4, Folder 3, M. Getting (trans. M. P. Getting), 'American Slovaks and the Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept During the Years 1914-1918, Part I', [1933/trans. 1990], f. 16.

⁴⁰ V. S. Mamatey, 'The Slovaks and Carpatho-Rusyns', in O'Grady (ed.), *The Immigrants' Influence on Wilson's Peace Policies*, p. 231; Čulen, *History of Slovaks in America*, p. 354.

⁴¹ Mamatey, 'The Slovaks and Carpatho-Rusyns', p. 231.

agenda of the Slovak League of America during the summer of 1914, as the Hungarian opposition leader and eight delegates of his political party returned to the United States in June to further raise his profile in the United States and to earn extra party funds from Magyar groups there. The diplomatic crisis and prospect of a general war led to Károlyi's group cutting short this trip and returning to Europe in late July.⁴²

To counter both the efforts of Károlyi's agitation and to highlight the policies of the Hungarian state to an international audience, the Slovak League of America deemed it necessary to draft its own declaration of nationalist demands on behalf of their Slovak counterparts in Upper Hungary. Its president Albert Mamatey expressed his organisation's desire that:

this memorandum should be publicised not only here in America, but should be sent to Europe also: to the [Hungarian] Cabinet Office and government and to the serious Magyar [language] newspapers [...] as well as serious Czech, German, Slavic and if possible French newspapers as well. [...] for it to have a greater effect, this step must be taken in the name of the American Slovaks as a whole.⁴³

The Slovak League asserted a claim to speak on behalf of the Slovak migrant colony in the United States, by its representation of each of the major and politically-engaged fraternal societies and newspapers. The League's executive committee backed the drafting of a memorandum in April, the full text of which was first published in the Slovak American press on 30 July.⁴⁴ Just two days earlier on the other side of the Atlantic, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia - an event that

⁴² A. Konta, 'To Seek American Sympathy for Hungarian Liberty', *New York Times*, 5 July 1914, p. SM10; 'Cleveland in a Ferment', *New York Times*, 27 July 1914, p. 2.

⁴³ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, 'Milan Getting sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916', Albert Mamatey to Milan Getting, Pittsburgh, PA, 2 April 1914, f. 1-2.

⁴⁴ *Národné Noviny*, 30 July 1914, p. 4.

brought about a general war in Europe and placed the expression of Slovak national rights by its migrant leaders in a radically different context.⁴⁵

The July draft of the ‘Memorandum of the Slovak League of America’ consciously mirrored the content and tone of ‘The Memorandum of the Slovak Nation’ that had been set out by nationalist leaders in Upper Hungary in 1861.⁴⁶ The difficulty of finding a copy of the 1861 text delayed the completion of the Slovak League’s draft, which later published both texts so that readers could judge the integrity of the Slovak American counterpart compared to the original document for themselves.⁴⁷ Like the 1861 Memorandum, the Slovak American declaration called for measures to ‘establish and guarantee under the law the full equality of all nations in Hungary’.⁴⁸ The Slovak League sought to achieve this goal by calling for the Hungarian state to recognise the legal rights of all of its citizens under the 1868 Nationalities Law, as well as providing state support for Slovak-language schools and departments for the study of the Slovak language and literature in Hungarian universities.⁴⁹ Its memorandum similarly retained the 1861 declaration’s call for Slovak political autonomy, while framing it in the updated language of other nationalist struggles of its time period. The Slovak League’s Memorandum explicitly cited the Irish Home Rule movement in asserting that ‘we call for “Home Rule”

⁴⁵ H. H. Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary, 1914-1918*, 2nd. Ed., London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 28.

⁴⁶ Palkovičová, ‘Ivan Bielek a Slovenská Líga’, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, ‘Milan Getting sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916’, Albert Mamatey to Milan Getting, Braddock, PA, 8 May 1914, f. 1; The documents formed an appendix to a work on Slovak-Magyar political relations in Hungary, published by the Slovak League in 1914. The purpose of this act is explained by Albert Mamatey in a foreword to the book, written on 31 August 1914 and prior to the subsequent redraft of the Memorandum of the Slovak League of America. See ‘Dr. Vacovský’ [M. Ivanka], *Slováci a Maďari: Politicko-Historická Úvaha*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Slovenského Hlasníku, 1914. p. 3-4; p. 102-107; p. 113-123.

⁴⁸ *Národné Noviny*, 30 July 1914, p. 4; SNA, Fond SLA, č. šk. 2, ‘Memorandum Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike, vydané menom Slovenskej emigrácie v Spojených Štátoch Amerických’, [July 1914], f. 1-2.

⁴⁹ *Národné Noviny*, 30 July 1914, p. 4.

(provided in English within the otherwise Slovak-language Memorandum) to be given to the Slovak nation, through the formation of a ‘Slovak District’ or ‘Region’ (*Okolie*) from all areas where Slovaks form a majority according to nationality’.⁵⁰ The Slovak League also asserted its wish that Slovak national rights should be achieved ‘within the framework of the Hungarian state’: the document did not call express a desire for Slovak national autonomy to take place within a reformed or federated Habsburg imperial state, far less independent Slovak statehood or political union with another national group.⁵¹ The Slovak League’s first political declaration therefore restated the core nationalist goals that had been central to the manifesto of the Slovak National Party for two full generations rather than expressing a new vision for Slovak nationalism.

The content of the ‘Memorandum of the Slovak League of America’ was shaped by the diverging views held among migrant leaders on the correct course of Slovak nationalism. The somewhat conservative nature of the memorandum was unacceptable to the radical wing of Slovak nationalist leaders in the United States, who even before the document’s publication agitated for the Slovak nationalists to break their ties to the Hungarian state. This campaign was led by the same group of Slovak leaders in New York who were central to the anti-Károlyi agitation: the Slovak Sokol officer and newspaper editor Milan Getting and his editorial counterpart at the *New Yorkský Denník* newspaper Ignác Gessay.⁵² The cooperation of Sokol groups and the *Denník* on political matters was formalised by their creation of a ‘Slovak Political League’ in New York in the spring of 1914 to coordinate their

⁵⁰ *Národné Noviny*, 30 July 1914, p. 4.

⁵¹ *Idem*.

⁵² Pavelcová, ‘Ignáca Gessaya’, p. 42.

activities - a political club that was chaired by Getting.⁵³ In a letter to the President of the Slovak League Albert Mamatey in the spring of 1914, Getting set out the political stance of this radical, New York faction on the future of the Slovak nation, declaring that ‘the only salvation can be seen in a federal reorganisation of Austria, a programme for which we will work with whichever party and at all times. Thus our slogan is ‘Away from the Crown of Saint Stephen [Hungary]’.⁵⁴ The New York radical faction signed the Slovak League’s drafted memorandum under protest, while complaining that the document ‘demonstrates our political weakness and lack of direction’ as a nationalist movement.⁵⁵ Getting leaked the Slovak League’s memorandum in the radical press prior to its official publication, while the *Denník* was singled out at the Slovak League’s congress in September 1914 for ‘polemicizing intensively’ against the contents of its declaration.⁵⁶

The dispute over the Slovak League’s memorandum pitted these radical Slovak nationalists against conservative voices, who viewed the draft declaration as the most appropriate assertion of Slovak national demands by the migrant colony. Central to both the drafting process of the July memorandum and the subsequent defence of its content was Ivan Daxner - son of Štefan Marko Daxner, one of the leading Slovak nationalist figures in the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Daxner was atypical among major political figures in the Slovak American life as he was not

⁵³ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, ‘Milan Getting sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916’, Milan Getting to Albert Mamatey, New York, 28 Mar. 1914, f. 1.

⁵⁴ *Idem*.

⁵⁵ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, ‘Milan Getting sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916’, Milan Getting to Mamatey, New York, 11 July 1914, f. 1.

⁵⁶ M. M. Stolárik, ‘The Role of the American Slovaks in the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia, 1914-1918’, (University of Ottawa, MA Thesis, 1968), f. 35; Fond SLA, č. šk. 2, ‘Slovenská Líga v Amerike, VIII Kongress, Pittsburgh’, Albert Mamatey to [Unknown] Editor of Slovak American newspaper, Pittsburgh, PA, 18 Sep. 1914, f. 1.

⁵⁷ Slovak Institute, Personalities File, ‘Ivan Daxner’, K. Čulen, ‘Storočnica Ivana Daxnera’, (1960), f. 133-134.

a regular or long-term economic migrant to the United States. He was a leading official of the Tatra Bank (*Tatra Banka*) financial organisation in Upper Hungary, who had been sent to the United States to represent the interests of this company which had lost \$100,000 of loans during the collapse of the Slovak American banks of Peter Rovnianek in 1910.⁵⁸ Daxner participated in the Slovak League of America while on this mission, and was unofficially acting as its chief financial secretary when the outbreak of war stranded him in the United States; owing to his own losses as a result of that conflict, he would not return to Europe until 1924.⁵⁹ Daxner's influence within the Slovak League peaked in early 1915 when he took on the role of general secretary of the organisation - a post that allowed him great scope to determine the precise details of the body's political declarations.⁶⁰ Historians have widely pointed out the importance of Daxner and other relatively cautious Slovak leaders in the United States - most prominently the editor of the *Národné Noviny* newspaper Ivan Bielek - in drafting the July Memorandum in the spirit of the original Slovak nationalist manifesto of 1861.⁶¹ Not only had Daxner's father actually played a role in drafting the 1861 Memorandum, but he also represented one of the few credible guides to the attitude of the Slovak nationalist leadership in Martin for Slovak League officials.⁶² As this study has shown, Daxner's conservative views on the Slovak national question were indeed supported by the actions - or more accurately, the inaction - of the nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary throughout the summer of 1914. The Slovak League's chief officials – not only Daxner, but also

⁵⁸ K. Čulen, 'Storočnica Ivana Daxnera', (1960), f. 133-134, f. 136-137; Slovak Institute, 'Personalities File: Ivan Daxner', M. Tkáč, 'Ivan Daxner', [unknown date], f. 1.

⁵⁹ Čulen, 'Storočnica Ivana Daxnera', f. 142.

⁶⁰ Ibid., f. 139; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 34.

⁶¹ Palkovičová, 'Ivan Bielek a Slovenská Líga', p. 11; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 35.

⁶² Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 33.

its President Albert Mamatey - launched a vigorous defence of their call for Slovak autonomy within the Hungarian state against its radical critics, possessing in this dispute also the support of the chief Catholic and secular fraternal newspapers.⁶³ As Ivan Bielek continued to argue several months later, the Slovak League's July draft memorandum 'requested everything that we could under the existing pre-war conditions, and [demands] that we could also lobby for before the educated world and its politicians'.⁶⁴ In this way, the Slovak League's largely conservative leadership portrayed themselves as pragmatic operators compared to the idealistic views and internally divisive agitation of their radical opponents.

The prevailing desire to place Slovak national demands 'within the framework of the Hungarian state' became less palatable in this wartime context. Speaking ostensibly on behalf of Slovaks at a mass meeting in New York's Central Opera House, the radical Slovak American journalist Milan Getting declared on 1 August 1914 that 'when the despotic monarchy of Austria-Hungary calls the Slovaks to its defence in its interests, the Slovaks remember that it was Austria-Hungary that has permitted the destruction of the national life of the Slovaks, and so it is that the Slovaks before the civilized world give answer that they will not permit themselves to be used as ammunition for Austro-Hungarian cannon'.⁶⁵ While the hostility of radical leaders like Getting to Vienna's war aims was hardly surprising, its declaration of war was similarly denounced by the mainstream Slovak American

⁶³ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 33.

⁶⁴ Ivan Bielek, 'Važný politický krok amerických Slovákov!' Balch Institute/HSP, 'National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)', Box 2, *Pamätník Národný Slovenský Spolok v Spojených štátoch amerických, Vydaný z Príležitosti 25-Ročného Jubileumu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1915*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Národných Novín, 1915, p. 113.

⁶⁵ 'Slavs Here Pledge All Aid to Servia', *New York Times*, 2 Aug 1914, p. 5.

press and fraternal leadership. In September 1914, the National Slovak Society's newspaper set out its editorial view of the First World War, stating that:

We cannot identify with the politics of Austria-Hungary nor with the politics of Berlin, because neither have signified any good for ourselves [...] but we shall identify with and trust those who in their great sacrifices are now struggling against these killers of Slavdom and against the Pan-German hydra!

We shall and we must declare openly that we believe in Russia, that we welcome its efforts and that we believe in its stated ambitions [...] The victorious advance of our Russian brothers in the cause of liberating every Slavic nation must fill the hearts of every true Slovak and Slav with great joy.⁶⁶

On 5 August 1914 the editor of the Catholic Union's *Jednota* newspaper, Jozef Hušek, similarly described the war as 'a fight between Germandom and Slavdom [...] a life or death struggle' in eastern Europe.⁶⁷ Hušek declared his belief that Slovaks in Europe had been merely 'servants to the Habsburgs' rather than loyal subjects of the imperial dynasty, arguing that 'Slovak freedom will sprout from the defeat of this German-Magyar regime'.⁶⁸ The fact that the conflict initially broke out between Austria-Hungary, Serbia and the Russian Empire played a significant role in shaping Slovak American attitudes to the Habsburg regime: for Slovak American journalists and fraternal officers alike were enthusiastic supporters of the 'Slav' cause in the Balkan region. The National Slovak Society's almanac for 1915 portrayed the Russian war effort as 'a battle for the cause of Slavdom' and expressed regret that Slovak soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army had to 'fire at their own brothers, the Serbs and Russians... who are fighting for Slovak freedom and the

⁶⁶ *Národné Noviny*, 24 Sep. 1914, p. 4.

⁶⁷ *Jednota*, 5 Aug. 1914, p. 4.

⁶⁸ *Idem*.

breaking of Austria and German power'.⁶⁹ A similar *Jednota* editorial in February 1915 captured this prevailing sentiment of Slovak American leaders by despairing that 'the Slovak nation is spilling its most sacred blood on the frontlines in the interests of their oppressors; if we were the masters of our own destiny... we would fight in the ranks of the Slavs - alongside the Serbs and Russians'.⁷⁰ The open sympathy of Slovak American leaders for the purportedly 'Slavic' cause of Austria-Hungary's opponents undermined their desire to secure Slovak national rights within Hungary and the Habsburg dynastic state as a whole. The uncertainty that came with the first general European conflict in a century also worked against the Slovak League's argument that their demands were simply a pragmatic set of goals. With the future state system throughout central and eastern Europe placed in doubt by the outcome of massive battles on the other side of the Atlantic, Slovak leaders in the United States were emboldened to express their nationalist aims in full. Following its critical declaration of war against two 'fellow Slav' states in August 1914, Austria-Hungary no longer held deep loyalty or even unquestioned political support among Slovak American leaders.

The outbreak of war gave the radical faction of Slovak nationalists an advantage in their criticism of the Slovak League's memorandum. The original draft's declaration of fidelity to the Hungarian state directly conflicted with the stance of a broader segment of Slovak nationalist opinion on the war, where they openly declared their hostility to Hungary and to the war aims of the wider dynastic state. The conflict also undermined the case for pragmatism set out by Ivan Daxner and other conservative leaders, who had argued that political autonomy within

⁶⁹ P. J. K. [Anon.], 'Europská vojna', *Kalendárium 1915*, p. 64, p. 75.

⁷⁰ *Jednota*, 2 Feb. 1915, p. 4.

Hungary represented the maximum demands that the Slovak migrant colony could demand for their countrymen in the 'old country'. In the context of a total war engulfing Europe, all bets about the future status of Slovaks at home, the Hungarian state and the Habsburg dynasty were off the table. Radical critics of the July memorandum of the Slovak League such as Milan Getting and Ignác Gessay now asserted that its contents had to be amended to reflect this wartime context, as well as to meet their own preconceived agenda of breaking political ties with Hungary. They called for an extraordinary congress of the Slovak League to determine the matter, as well as to handle the provision of financial support for widowed and orphaned Slovaks in Upper Hungary, that was being undertaken by the fraternal societies.⁷¹ This argument was taken up by other migrant leaders such as the Catholic priest Ján Liščinský, who also attacked the conservative stance of the Slovak League through his publication, entitled *Kritika*.⁷² Giving way to these arguments, the Slovak League's President Albert Mamatey invited all clerical, journalistic and fraternal society leaders to a special congress held in Pittsburgh on 10 September 1914 to discuss their political response in 'this serious and critical period for our Slovak nation'.⁷³

The Pittsburgh congress of the Slovak League of America developed into an argument between radical and conservative voices, with Getting and Gessay restating their agenda of immediately renouncing Slovak national ties to Hungary.⁷⁴ Leading

⁷¹ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 49; IHRCA, Box SLK-19, Periodicals 'Za-', Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota, *Zápisnica XVI. Konvencie Prvej Katolíckej Slovenskej Jednoty, od 14. do 19. septembra 1914 v Harrisburg, PA*, Middletown, PA: Tlačou Jednoty, 1914, p. 7; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 36.

⁷² Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 49.

⁷³ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, 'Milan Getting sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916', Circular of Albert Mamatey to Milan Getting and other Slovak American leaders, Pittsburgh, PA, 29 Aug. 1914, f. 1.

⁷⁴ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 51.

League officials and Mamatey attempted to smooth over this dispute, by stating that their memorandum consisted merely of ‘minimal demands’ that ‘could later be written more broadly and widened’ at a more appropriate time in the war.⁷⁵ Ivan Daxner’s argument at the congress is quoted in Getting’s memoirs, in which the conservative League official expressed his view that Slovak nationalists ought to ‘choose a road by which, step by step, we could call attention of strong factions to ourselves [...] so that these influential factors in any sort of future political combination will permit the Slovak Nation to attain complete self-rule’.⁷⁶ In his own words, Getting claims to have countered this stance by declaring that Slovak leaders ought to instead ‘announce that we join with the Czechs, and I justify this with the fact that we are so small as to be unnoticeable’.⁷⁷ As shown in the previous chapter of this study, a political union between the Bohemian Crown Lands and newly formed ‘Slovakia’ (within a reformed Habsburg state) had been the subject of Getting’s final, pre-war correspondence with Rudolf Pilát, the Czech banker and official in ‘Czechoslav Union’. Getting’s declaration of support to the Slovak League congress represented the first open declaration in favour of such a political union. While Getting’s account of the congress as no doubt self-serving to some degree, Daxner’s own version of the Slovak Memorandum controversy does not noticeably differ from the portrayal given by his chief political rival. In a post-war pamphlet accounting for the conduct of the Slovak League during the war, Daxner remarked that ‘no-one could have known at the beginning of the war what its outcome would have been and whether Austria-Hungary would survive in some form or would be

⁷⁵ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept’, f. 51.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 52.

⁷⁷ *Idem.*

destroyed'.⁷⁸ He emphasised that the Slovak League 'clearly demanded for the Slovak nation guarantees for a free development of its national life and full national autonomy' before and after the September congress.⁷⁹ In other words, Daxner restated his wartime stance that Slovak leaders on both sides of the Atlantic had to be pragmatic in their strategy and choice of political alliances. This divide in attitudes towards the Hungarian state within the Slovak League dominated the agenda of its September 1914 congress.

In order to end the impasse, the League formed a new committee to revise the contents of its July memorandum, that included the radical New York editors Getting and Ignác Gessay as members alongside Daxner and other conservative voices.⁸⁰ The chief difference between the amended 'Memorandum of the Slovak League' that was agreed to and published by this committee in September 1914 and the pre-war declaration lay in the now contested relationship between Slovak nationalism and the Hungarian state. Whereas the July document had called for Slovak national rights and an autonomous 'Slovak district' to be strictly achieved 'within the framework of the Hungarian state', the redrafted passage called for instead 'full autonomy and the right of self-determination (*sebaurčovanie*) for the Slovak nation in all political, cultural and economic spheres'.⁸¹ This meant that the Slovak League abandoned its commitment to achieving Slovak national rights solely within Hungary, by claiming that Slovak nationalists held the right to seek political cooperation with any national group or state actor that would uphold Slovak national demands. The September 1914 Memorandum did not therefore exclude the prospect of Slovak nationalists

⁷⁸ Balch Institute/HSP, I. Daxner, *Ako sa vodí nášmu slovenskému národu v Česko-slovenskej republike?*, Pittsburgh, PA: Slovenská Líga v Amerike, [1923], f. 5.

⁷⁹ Idem.

⁸⁰ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 52.

⁸¹ *Národné Noviny*, 30 July 1914, p. 4; *Národné Noviny*, 24 Sep. 1914, p. 5.

reaching a favourable settlement with Budapest, but it also set out alternative paths to achieving their goals outside of Hungary. It was the first political programme to claim the right of the 'Slovak nation' to determine the political state under which its national programme ought to be achieved: in short, it was a declaration of Slovak national self-determination.

The Question of Czech-Slovak Political Cooperation in the United States, September 1914-October 1915

While the Slovak League's redrafted Memorandum held open the prospect of Slovak nationalists securing their demands in a different state than the Kingdom of Hungary, historians have rightly pointed out that it did not endorse a political union between Slovak nationalists and their Czech counterparts.⁸² This idea had too few supporters in the various Slovak American organisations and was not promoted by any form of open political agitation from either Czech or Slovak politicians in Europe in the autumn of 1914. A political programme drawn up by a deeply divided committee, the Slovak League's reworked memorandum was a compromise document that did not reflect the real goals of either its radical or conservative factions. Yet the redrafted wording of the Slovak League's manifesto was understood by the radical leaders as a significant step forward for their cause. Milan Getting regarded the memorandum of September 1914 as being 'the first stage of the final realization that Hungary is not the native land of the Slovaks; that we could escape from this jail and that there existed the possibility for the creation of a Slavonic State in the formation of

⁸² V. S. Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America, 1914-1918*, Washington D.C.: Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Science in America, 1976, p. 10; Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision*, p. 151.

Czechoslovakia'.⁸³ One of the chief objections to the Slovak League's original manifesto from the radical side had been its open commitment to achieving Slovak national rights within the political borders of Hungary alone - owing to their agitation as well as the wartime context, this declaration had been dropped in the amended program. The Czecho-Slovak partisan Milan Getting therefore understood the September 1914 manifesto as a document in which 'demands for self-rule were stated so elastically that they permitted explanation of those things which the Slovaks really wanted'.⁸⁴ In the Sokol officer's view, this goal for the Slovak national movement was full political union with the Czechs in a common and independent state. The value of the Slovak Memorandum produced in September 1914 was in its sufficiently vague wording: this allowed competing factions among Slovak American leaders to give their own meaning to the document and to press for their own set of political objectives to be taken up by the Slovak League during the remaining course of the First World War.

The collective stance expressed by the Slovak League of America on behalf of their countrymen in Europe took its shape from the outcome of continued polemic debates and machinations between the various Slovak American organisations. In this way, the Slovak League's noncommittal stance towards political statehood in the its Memorandum of September 1914 was replaced by a definitive statement in favour of creating an independent, Czecho-Slovak state, as set out in the 'Cleveland Agreement' of October 1915. The title of Gregory Ference's study of this wartime change in Slovak American attitudes captured the theme of critical 'indecision'

⁸³ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 53.

⁸⁴ Ibid., f. 52.

among the Slovak American leadership as a whole.⁸⁵ It was rather at the level of the political factions operating within, as well as outside, the Slovak League that coherent visions for the future of Slovaks living in Europe were expressed. Almost as soon as the ink had dried on the redrafted form of the Slovak League's Memorandum, agitation in favour of the Czecho-Slovak project, that once more pitched the radical and Czechophile section of Slovak opinion in the United States against the official stance of the Slovak League supported by its leading conservative officeholders such as Ivan Daxner. Following the publication of the Memorandum of the Slovak League of America, these internal disputes in Slovak American life were of greater interest to other political organisations seeking to transform the political map of central and eastern Europe. The interaction between Czech and Slovak nationalist organisations in the United States ultimately brought about a common political programme for the creation of an independent Czecho-Slovak state. In the absence of political support for this project among Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary, the Slovak migrant colony played a key role in legitimising this project of political union. This study will demonstrate how in the context of the ongoing European war, this radical idea of breaking with Hungary and forming a new state won enough support to become the chief goal of Slovak American nationalist activism.

The idea of forming a joint wartime political programme among Czech and Slovak Americans was chiefly expressed by the self-styled 'progressive nationalist' organisations within both migrant communities. We have already seen how a circle of progressive Slovak leaders, primarily in New York, agitated for a pro-Czech

⁸⁵ Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision*.

stance to be included in the Slovak League's Memorandum. It is necessary to briefly account for their Czech counterparts to understand how these activities combined as joint agitation for a Czecho-Slovak political program. Whereas Slovak American groups had already been planning a declaration of national aims prior to the outbreak of the European war, the war brought together progressive Czech groups in the United States for the same purpose. Radical Czech American organisations denounced Austria-Hungary and declared their support for the Serbian (and Russian) cause in the war, while the *Svornost* (Concord) newspaper in Chicago promoted the idea of uniting Czech groups in the United States to conduct collective action for their nationalist cause in Europe.⁸⁶ Rudolf Pšenka,⁸⁷ *Svornost's* editor, had been a member of the Czech Realist party of Tomáš Masaryk until 1911.⁸⁸ Prior to Masaryk's own decision to leave Austria-Hungary to conduct anti-Austrian agitation in Western Europe, his ideological counterparts in Chicago organised what became known as the 'Bohemian⁸⁹ National Alliance' in September 1914 to agitate for a Czech nationalist programme directed against the Central Powers.⁹⁰ The agenda of the Bohemian National Alliance was described to the *New York Times* by one of its spokesmen as 'the creation of a free federation embracing the Czechs, Moravians, Silesians and Slovaks'.⁹¹ In the event of an Entente victory in the war, according to

⁸⁶ V. S. Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America*, p. 8-9.

⁸⁷ M. Rechcigl, *Czech American Timeline: Chronology of Milestones in the History of Czechs in America*, Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2013, p. 204-205.

⁸⁸ V. S. Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America*, p. 8-9.

⁸⁹ In the Czech language, the word *Čech* is used interchangeably to describe a Czech-speaking male (Czech national in the present day) and a man who was born or lived in the region of Bohemia (the Czech word for that territory being *Čechy*). In the English language, the distinction between the two terms 'Bohemian' and 'Czech' is often mistranslated. In the United States, Czech-speaking migrants were more widely known as 'Bohemians' prior to the First World War: to promote their political agenda in wartime, many Czech-speaking nationalists often used 'Bohemian' in their publications and statements to an English-speaking audience. The terms 'Bohemian' and 'Czech' – in the strict context of nationalist agitation in the United States – are understood in this study as interchangeable.

⁹⁰ V. S. Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America*, p. 8-9.

⁹¹ 'For a Free Bohemia', *New York Times*, 28 Nov. 1914, p. 2.

this political vision set out in November 1914, the basic territorial form of the subsequent Czechoslovak state were laid out in the United States. Secular leaders in New York organised their own committee with the same basic purpose, with their body including leaders of the Czech Sokol organisation as well as Tomáš Čapek, the lawyer born in Moravia who had published a sympathetic history of the Slovaks in the English language.⁹² In the spring of 1915, the New York progressives combined their activities with the Bohemian National Alliance; a few weeks later a group of Czech socialists in Chicago, including Charles Pergler, who became the chief wartime representative of the Alliance, also joined under its banner.⁹³ As historians have observed, these efforts united only the secular organisations of the Czech American community in a collective political body: the leading Czech Catholic organisation did not commit to the political goals of their secular nationalist counterparts until 1917.⁹⁴ The combination of secular Czech American groups as the Bohemian National Alliance was nevertheless sufficient to present a viable campaign for Czech national rights in opposition to Austria-Hungary to American official and public opinion, and to negotiate with the Slovak League of America as an equal body.

The political activity of Czech groups in the United States was also shaped by the underground movement of Czech nationalists opposed to Austria-Hungary, known as the *Maffie*. These concrete links between the efforts of the migrant community and a radical minority of Czech leaders in Europe, both of which were planning an anti-Austrian campaign, were not possessed by their Slovak American

⁹² Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America*, p. 9.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 10; B. M. Unterberger, *The United States, Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Czechoslovakia*, College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2000, p. 29.

⁹⁴ Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America*, p. 10; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 44.

counterparts at this stage in the war. The committee of activists in New York, for example, was greatly influenced by Emanuel Voska, the Czech-speaking President of the Sokol movement in the United States who had been holidaying in Austria-Hungary when the war broke out.⁹⁵ Voska was already well-known to one of the *Maffie* leaders, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, for having helped to organise the politician's lecture tour of the United States years before.⁹⁶ His greatest asset to the Czech underground movement in wartime however was his U.S. citizenship.⁹⁷ Voska could therefore freely travel out of Austria-Hungary to serve as a personal courier, delivering messages between Masaryk and sympathisers of the Czech nationalist cause in Western Europe.⁹⁸ He went to Britain, for example, to successfully arrange a meeting between the writer R. W. Seton-Watson and Masaryk in neutral Holland, that ultimately prepared the ground for Masaryk to leave Austria-Hungary in December 1914.⁹⁹ At the same time, Voska offered his services to the British intelligence services, for whom he later operated with a network of agents to counter propaganda and intrigue against the Entente powers in the United States.¹⁰⁰ Following completion of his clandestine mission to London, Voska returned to the United States with the first-hand knowledge that Masaryk and a minority of other Czech political leaders were organising a political programme seeking to break up Austria-Hungary and form an independent Czech state. The activities of the New York committee were directed towards raising funds to support these activities of the *Maffie* in Europe. These funds became increasingly vital when Masaryk and his

⁹⁵ T. G. Masaryk, *The Making of a State: Memories and Observations, 1914-1918*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1927, p. 26.

⁹⁶ Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, p. 27.

⁹⁷ Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, p. 26.

⁹⁸ Idem; Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, p. 27.

⁹⁹ Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, p. 241-243.

counterpart Edvard Beneš set up their centres of political activity in London and Paris during 1915.¹⁰¹ As Masaryk described the role of each centre of wartime political activity in his memoirs, he reckoned that ‘the American Czechs could finance us, and in Russia an army could be formed out of our prisoners of war’.¹⁰²

In the autumn of 1915, these links between Masaryk’s group of anti-Austrian exiles and Czech American leadership were strengthened by the despatch of Vojta Beneš to the United States in order to coordinate the activities of the Bohemian National Alliance.¹⁰³ Beneš was able to deliver news from Europe that his younger brother Edvard, Masaryk as well as the Franco-Slovak Milan Rastislav Štefánik had set themselves up as a ‘Czech Committee Abroad’ -which from February 1916 lobbied Entente statesmen for recognition as the ‘Czechoslovak National Council’.¹⁰⁴ Leading a public rally of migrant organisations held in New York in November 1915, the elder Beneš was described as ‘a special agent [sent] to work among the one million Bohemians [Czechs] in the United States, under the direction of Professor T. G. Masaryk’.¹⁰⁵ His speech called attention not only to the national rights of his Czech-speaking compatriots, but also accused Austria-Hungary of ‘a systematic policy of cruelty and oppression against the Slovak population of Bohemia’.¹⁰⁶ Since the Slovak population of Bohemia (or even the Bohemian Crown Lands, where a small minority of Slovak-speakers lived in Moravia) was negligible, Beneš was really directing attention to the national rights of Slovak-speakers in Upper Hungary. It was telling that the word ‘Bohemia’ was used in its place though: as Czech

¹⁰¹ A. Orzoff, *The Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914-1948*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 39-40; L. Valiani (trans. M. Secker), *The End of Austria-Hungary*, London: Secker and Warburg, 1973, p. 120-121.

¹⁰² Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, p. 86.

¹⁰³ Idem; V. S. Mamatey, *Building Czechoslovakia in America*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept’, f. 92

¹⁰⁵ ‘Protests by Bohemians’, *New York Times*, 9 Nov 1915, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ Idem.

agitators in the United States often combined their territorial demand for Slovak-speaking parts of Upper Hungary with the Bohemian Crown Lands under this term, and often to the irritation of their Slovak American counterparts. The efforts of the Bohemian National Alliance were therefore closely directed in support of Masaryk's group of émigrés in London and Paris. By contrast, the Czech American groups were relatively detached from the efforts of Czech émigré groups in Russia to win the support of the Tsar for a Kingdom of Bohemia ruled by a lesser branch of the Romanov family.¹⁰⁷ The secular and politically progressive groups that made up the Bohemian National Alliance were sympathetic to the agenda of Masaryk's circle of émigrés in western Europe in comparison to the more conservative programme that had to be set out by Czech leaders seeking political favour in Russia. This cooperation was further secured by the ties of familiarity and family between Masaryk's nascent 'Czechoslovak National Council' and leaders of the Czech American effort to liberate their countrymen from Austro-Hungarian rule. In contrast to their Slovak counterparts, who set out and maintained their wartime political stance without any consultation with nationalist leaders at home, the Czech American agenda was soon integrated as a key part of the broader *Maffie* movement and of Masaryk's political activities in exile.

The newly created Czech American political organisations closely cooperated with their ideological counterparts within the Slovak migrant colony to push for their common goal of a Czecho-Slovak political union. The chief political effect of this agitation was to keep this idea central to the thoughts of the broader Slovak American leadership, despite the Slovak League's non-committal memorandum

¹⁰⁷ Unterberger, *Rise of Czechoslovakia*, p. 11-12.

having attempted to put the issue to one side. One of the chief centres of this campaign was New York, where in December 1914 the leaders of its Czech political committee, including Voska and Čapek, joined forces with a New York political association led by Getting and Gessay to form a ‘New York Committee of Czechs and Slovaks’: a twenty-five man group that also became known under its code name of ‘Appel’.¹⁰⁸ The purpose of the ‘Appel’ group, as described by Getting in his private correspondence, was to counter the influence of the conservative Slovak leaders like Daxner, who the New York radicals perceived to be blocking their desired goal. Its committee members made this sentiment clear by declaring that ‘as the administration of the [Slovak] League is not yet willing to state a clear position against the Magyars, nor for Czecho-Slovak union, we wish to force it to submit this stated idea in its declaration’.¹⁰⁹ The Slovak members of this committee primarily used agitation in the press and within the Slovak League to try to change the official Slovak American stance on its national demands from the war. At the congress of the Slovak League held in February 1915, Getting and Gessay argued for a definitive statement from the League in favour of cooperating with Czech American groups. After a lengthy debate, this effort was defeated and the content of the Memorandum of the Slovak League of America as set out in September 1914 was ratified once again by the congress.¹¹⁰ The radicals’ opposing case was derided by one critic as a far-fetched attempt ‘to win Slovak freedom solely by their own diplomatic ability and without any bloodshed’.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, ‘Getting, Milan sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916’, Milan Getting to Albert Mamatey, New York, 5 Dec. 1914, f. 1. SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 19, inv. č. 925, poč. č. 117+3f., Milan Getting to Vavro Šrobár, Pittsburgh, PA, 14 May 1929, 178/26/4.

¹⁰⁹ Getting to Šrobár, 14 May 1929, 178/26/4.

¹¹⁰ Stolárik, ‘Role of American Slovaks’, f. 38.

¹¹¹ *Jednota*, 3 Mar. 1915, p. 4.

Undeterred by this setback, the radicals used their editorial positions in the Slovak American press to call for a political agreement with the Czechs and to condemn the Slovak League for being too meek in its response to the wartime situation. Both Getting and Gessay used their newspapers to argue that, by its refusal to commit to an active Czecho-Slovak political agenda, the Slovak League was ‘doing nothing’ (*nerobí nič*) to liberate their countrymen from Hungarian rule.¹¹² This was a trope used regularly by the radical wing throughout the war to express their impatience at the collective decision-making process of the League and to justify their own independent cooperation with Czech American leaders.¹¹³ In response to these attacks, both officials within the Slovak League as well as independent journalists defended what they believed to be a sound position. Albert Mamatey restated the League’s stance by insisting that ‘we must demand and achieve autonomy for the Slovaks: whether this would be in this promised ‘Czech-Slovak state’, or ‘under the Russians’, or whether we remain in old Hungary; for it could still be the case that Hungary is not broken up but instead treated diplomatically speaking as a single political territory’.¹¹⁴ The Slovak League’s President also responded directly to Gessay’s attacks on its administration by labelling the journalist a ‘distorter of the facts’.¹¹⁵ These often bitter and personal exchanges between the radical, pro-Czech minority and other Slovak American leaders continued during the first half of 1915, yielding little change in the stance of

¹¹² Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, ‘Getting, Milan sr., Correspondence, 1908-1916’, Albert Mamatey to Milan Getting, Pittsburgh, PA, 10 May 1915, f. 1; Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept’, f. 87.

¹¹³ AMS, Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 118, porad. č. 466, Circular, Milan Getting to Slovenský Sokol organisation membership, [New York], 15 Jan. 1916, f. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Národné Noviny*, 4 Mar. 1915, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ *Idem*.

the Slovak League but kept the issue of political union with the Czechs firmly on its agenda.

The larger New York committee of Czechs and Slovaks also sought to promote this through publications and pronouncements that stressed the apparent unity of purpose among Czech and Slovak groups in the United States, as well as in Europe. The Moravian lawyer Tomáš Čapek organised the publication of a propaganda book for the group's cause titled *Bohemia under Hapsburg Misrule* (1915), which alongside an extensive account of Czech nationalist grievances in Austria-Hungary included a brief account of the Slovak position. This section was put together by Čapek and Milan Getting, the contents largely reflecting their own ardent support for uniting the Czech and Slovak national causes.¹¹⁶ The work, for example, cited as evidence of Czecho-Slovak unity a recent resolution stating that 'the Bohemians and Slovaks are one in language, one in blood, one in national faith, indissoluble and indivisible', a resolution that had only been passed at a meeting of their own New York political committee, rather than any of the much larger Czech or Slovak migrant organisations.¹¹⁷ Their summary of the Slovak national stance towards the war and Austria-Hungary concluded that:

When the time comes to redraw the map of Austria-Hungary, the Slovaks will ask to be freed from the Hungarian yoke. And if they cannot have a government of their own, their second choice is to co-operate with the Bohemians toward the establishment of a confederacy that shall include the autonomous states of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakland [Upper Hungary]. Thus to the present ethnical [sic] unity of Slovaks and Bohemians would be added that of political unity.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 55.

¹¹⁷ T. Čapek, 'The Slovaks of Hungary', in T. Čapek (ed.), *Bohemia Under Hapsburg Misrule*, New York and Chicago, IL: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1915, p. 114-115.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

This stated desire on behalf of both Czechs and Slovaks for independent statehood was also expressed directly to the American press. In August 1915, a fellow Czech American activist wrote to the *New York Times* declaring that ‘the hour of national enfranchisement has arrived, and Bohemians, Moravians, Silesians and Slovaks are looking forward to a new life. Bohemia will take her place among the free, independent nations: the old lands of the Bohemian Crown, namely, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, and the Slovaks, occupying the greatest part of North-western Hungary, will be united again’.¹¹⁹ It is worth noting here that the author of this letter expressed his view that the lands in which most Czech and Slovak speakers lived had once formed a united territory and ought to be joined ‘again’ as an outcome of the war. This statement had no factual basis in the history of the Austrian Empire, but rather projected back to a much earlier, medieval kingdom known as ‘Great Moravia’ that was centred in Upper Hungary and also encompassed some part of the Bohemian Crown Lands.¹²⁰ Tenuous as this reference to a thousand-year defunct kingdom may seem, it allowed supporters of a Czecho-Slovak state to argue that they were not in fact creating a novel state in central Europe, but were rather ‘re-establishing’ a former political union that had been lost within the region over the centuries. This distant historical legacy would remain an important symbol for Czechoslovak unity

¹¹⁹ A. J. Moravek, Letter to the Editor, ‘Bohemia’s Aspirations’, *New York Times*, 4 Aug. 1915, p. 10.

¹²⁰ Ironically, the historical legacy of ‘Great Moravia’ is now more often interpreted as a forerunner of Slovak rather than Czecho-Slovak statehood. See Špiesz and Čaplovič, *Illustrated Slovak History*, p. 29; H. L. Agnew, ‘New States, Old Identities? The Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Historical Understandings Of Statehood’, *Nationalities Papers*, 28:4, (2000), p. 624; A. Findor, ‘(De)Constructing Slovak National Mythology’, *Sociológia*, 2002: 3, p. 197; P. Burzová, ‘Towards a New Past: Some Reflections on Nationalism in Post-Socialist Slovakia’, *Nationalities Papers*, 40: 6 (Nov. 2012), p. 883.

and was used to support the territorial claims of that state during and immediately after the First World War.¹²¹

This campaign to raise the profile of the Czecho-Slovak idea among a wider American and international audience came at the cost of alienating a substantial body of Slovak American opinion. The New York radical committee's claims about the stated desire of Slovaks for a political union with the Czechs simply did not reflect the firm public stance set out by the Slovak League, nor the beliefs of many Slovak American fraternal society leaders and newspaper editors. These Slovak American leaders took issue with passages from the New York group's literature that failed to recognise the Slovaks as a distinct nation to the Czechs.¹²² Their declaration as restated in Čapek's *Bohemia Under Hapsburg Misrule* that the two national groups were 'one in language, one in blood, one in national faith' caused a furore in the Slovak American press.¹²³ A conviction that the Slovak language and national identity were distinct from the Czechs had been a significant element to the emerging Slovak nationalism of the nineteenth century, and despite the willingness of Slovak American leaders to work with their Czech counterparts for a collective political cause, there existed little support among them for the idea that the two groups were united in terms of 'national faith'. Ivan Bielek, editor of National Slovak Society's newspaper, said of Čapek's work that it 'serves as the greatest proof that the Czechs here in America are not of the same view as ourselves; they wish to acquire Slovaks solely for the benefit of a Czech state, so that with our consent they can make their

¹²¹ Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*, p. 145; G. Heiss, Á. Klimó, P. Kolář and D. Kovač, 'Habsburg's Difficult Legacy: Comparing and Relating Austrian, Czech, Magyar and Slovak National Historical Master Narratives', in S. Berger and C. Lorenz (eds.), *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, p. 375.

¹²² Daxner, *Ako sa vodí nášmu slovenskému národu*, p. 7.

¹²³ T. Čapek, 'The Slovaks of Hungary', in Čapek (ed.), *Bohemia Under Hapsburg Misrule*, p. 114-115; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 40.

own nation numerically stronger'.¹²⁴ Another offending article provided by a Czech activist to the American press stated that 'we Czechs are a nation of twelve million' people - a claim that incorporated the Slovaks of Upper Hungary (as well as a minority of Slovaks in Moravia) with Czech-speakers as members of this putative 'nation'. This provoked a similar rebuke from the *Jednota* editor Jozef Hušek, who exclaimed that 'the Magyars say that we are Magyars; the Czechs that we are also Czechs. But we are Slovaks! And God willing we shall remain Slovaks! We have stated it loud and clear. What is it about this that the Czechs cannot understand?'¹²⁵

The conflict between how some Czech American leaders viewed the proposed state and the broadly expressed desire of Slovak Americans for national recognition was never truly resolved. Even an ardently pro-Czech activist like Getting comments in his memoirs that 'it was necessary to speak of a Czechoslovak State and [in the later years of the war] a Czechoslovak Army. When such mistakes were made by individuals of the highest standing, they provoked more feelings of resentment in Slovaks than even the strongest of Hungarian propaganda had been able to provoke'¹²⁶ The descriptions set out by agitators for Czecho-Slovak statehood were often attempts to simplify the national makeup of the new state, to appeal to an American and statesmen who possessed little grasp of Czech or Slovak national claims. At the same time, however, these statements betrayed a lack of genuine understanding between Czech and Slovak leaders in the United States. The apparent 'sensitivity' of Slovak American leaders on the distinctiveness of Slovak language and nationhood represented their deeply held beliefs, on matters that were central to the project of political unification. While both radical agitation in the migrant press

¹²⁴ *Národné Noviny*, 24 June 1915, p. 4.

¹²⁵ *Jednota*, 30 June 1915, p. 4.

¹²⁶ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 224.

and wider public declarations by the New York committee kept the idea of a political union central to the nationalist political debate among Slovak American leaders, both tactics did little to win new support among Slovak migrant leader for Czecho-Slovak cooperation. On the contrary, as prominent a Slovak leader as the *Jednota* editor Jozef Hušek stated in March 1915 his view that ‘we Slovaks wish to have nothing in common with these New York Czechs’.¹²⁷ The *Jednota* editor identified the committee’s membership - quite accurately - as representing only one section of thought among the ‘freethinkers’ or secular bodies within the Czech American community.¹²⁸ Without the broader support of other Czech groups or indeed the numerically larger, Czech Catholic organisations, Hušek concluded that Slovaks could not recognise these agitators as ‘representatives of the majority of Czech Americans’.¹²⁹ Within months Hušek and other Slovak American leaders in fact overlooked many of these conditions to work with Czech groups for a seemingly greater purpose, but this support would not be forthcoming without a change in the fractious relationship between Czecho-Slovak agitators and Slovak American groups.

The basis for a collective Czecho-Slovak liberation movement in the United States was established more by behind the scenes negotiations, rather than the result of polemic exchanges between radical and conservative leaders. While the Slovak League maintained its ambivalent stance as to which state Slovaks ought to be citizens of in a post-war Europe, its officials were at the same time in regular contact with Czech American groups to determine whether they could reach a common basis for political agitation. In contrast to the view of its radical fringe, most Slovak leaders in the United States did not consider these to be mutually exclusive positions.

¹²⁷ *Jednota*, 3 Mar. 1915, p. 4.

¹²⁸ *Jednota*, 24 Mar. 1915, p. 4.

¹²⁹ *Idem*.

What mattered to them was not the precise form of post-war state in which Slovaks would live, but rather that a credible guarantee of Slovak autonomy would be both offered and ultimately achieved. As the *Jednota* editor Jozef Hušek explained in March 1915:

If there were to be a change in the constitutional and political form of Austria-Hungary, so that a federation were formed of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia then we would be satisfied. If we were to receive full independence then we would also be satisfied [...] and would in due course join politically and constitutionally with the Bohemians and Moravians. But if events after the war do not lead to such radical changes, and we received only liberty within the bounds set out in Martin memorandum of 1861, then we must also be content. For that would also be a great haul for our cause. If we would have schools, if we were the masters in our own districts and if as a result of this we had many deputies in a parliament and the freedom to develop our own economic means, then we would not disappear [as a nation].¹³⁰

As these debates also took place within the Slovak League against the backdrop of an ongoing and still inconclusive European war in 1915, their reluctance to commit to a defined programme was framed by Hušek and others as a pragmatic choice.¹³¹ Yet among this wider set of political alliances conceived by Slovak nationalists, the wartime Slovak American leadership had a clear preference for working with the Czechs. In November 1914, the Slovak League's President, Albert Mamatey, exchanged letters with the Czech American activist Tomáš Čapek, in which he stated the League's objective of achieving 'full autonomy for Slovakia, without regard to which state unit we will find ourselves in as a result of the war'.¹³² Mamatey added however that:

¹³⁰ *Jednota*, 3 Mar. 1915, p. 4

¹³¹ *Idem*.

¹³² Fond SLA, č. šk. 2, poč. č. 82, 'Rôzna korešpondencia', Albert Mamatey to Tomáš Čapek, Pittsburgh, PA, 16 Nov. 1914, f. 2.

It should be understood that it would be best for us Slovaks to work hand in hand with our brother Czechs to found a new Czecho-Slovak state [...] in which each nation would have full autonomy and would not be able to intervene in another's internal affairs: just as it is here in the United States, where for example New York cannot and does not have the right to meddle with the internal affairs - the laws, courts and administration - of the state of Pennsylvania.¹³³

Such positive statements in part explain the great confidence of Čapek and the radical, pro-Czech faction of New York Slovaks in agitating for a Czecho-Slovak programme in the early months of the war. They misinterpreted Mamatey's own views on political cooperation as evidence that the Slovak League of America would imminently back their cause. When Mamatey and the Slovak League's acting secretary Ivan Daxner attended a meeting of the political committee of Czechs and Slovaks in New York a few months later, the radical leaders of the group further believed that a decisive shift in the League's policy would soon come to pass.¹³⁴ When the radical faction led by Getting and Gessay subsequently raised the topic of joining with the Czechs at the Slovak League's assembly in February 1915, they were crestfallen at the lack of support from Mamatey and other League officials for their agenda.¹³⁵ The support of the Slovak League's President for the idea of a Czecho-Slovak state was an important, but there remained many more conservative figures within the League organisation such as Daxner to secure broad consent for this program. Guarantees of Slovak autonomy within a common state were therefore required to gain the support of the Slovak League for this plan.

In October 1915, leaders of the regional group of the Bohemian National Alliance in Chicago took the initiative to finally secure political cooperation with

¹³³ Fond SLA, č. šk. 2, poč. č. 82, 'Rôzna korešpondencia', Albert Mamatey to Tomáš Čapek, Pittsburgh, PA, 16 Nov. 1914, f. 2.

¹³⁴ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 67.

¹³⁵ Ibid., f. 67, f. 69.

their Slovak American counterparts. Whereas the efforts of their Czech and radical Slovak counterparts in New York to bring about a Czecho-Slovak programme through public agitation had not succeeded, the Alliance's Chicago branch secretary Josef Tvrzický arranged a meeting with the Slovak League's chief officials Mamatey and Daxner to work out a common political platform between the two groups.¹³⁶ The 'Cleveland Agreement' that resulted from their conference on 22 October 1915 established the principles for the wartime campaign among Czech and Slovak migrant organisations to 'liberate' their counterparts in Europe from the rule of Austria-Hungary. Regarding the constitutional status of Slovaks within a new and independent 'Czecho-Slovak' state, the document expressed the goal of both groups as 'the joining of the Czech and Slovak lands in a federal union of states, with complete national autonomy for Slovakia, with its own parliament, its own state administration, complete cultural freedom'.¹³⁷ Slovakia would also be granted 'its own financial and political administration, with Slovak as its state language'.¹³⁸ The Cleveland Agreement further envisaged that this new state would be both democratic - granting its citizens universal suffrage with the secret ballot - and a constitutional monarchy organised according to practices 'similar to England [sic]'.¹³⁹ This proviso left room for the placing of a suitable European monarch - most likely a member of the Romanov dynasty - as its titular head of state.

As well as forming the basis for a common programme for Czecho-Slovak statehood after the war, the Cleveland Agreement also allowed its two signatory organisations to dominate the wartime political agenda of Czech and Slovak migrants

¹³⁶ *Národné Noviny*, 21 Oct. 1915, p. 4; Daxner, *Ako sa vodí nášmu slovenskému národu*, p. 8.

¹³⁷ *Jednota*, 24 Nov. 1915, p. 4.

¹³⁸ *Idem*.

¹³⁹ Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision*, p. 182.

living in the United States. The Bohemian National Alliance and Slovak League of America agreed to the creation of a common 'National Fund' to support their political agitation, as well as to help establish a common press bureau to provide official statements and propaganda on behalf of the Czech and Slovak nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁴⁰ Both organisations pledged to recognise no other body as a legitimate political representative of Czech and Slovak American migrants, and further stated that all wartime agreements between Czech and Slovak nationalists in Europe would require the approval of the two self-declared Czech and Slovak American representative bodies.¹⁴¹ While the migrant organisations were largely incapable of enforcing this stipulation on Czech and Slovak politicians in Europe, these measures greatly strengthened the position of the Slovak League's officials as the sole arbiters of political cooperation with Czech American leaders. As Gregory Ference has noted, the Cleveland Agreement allowed both the Slovak League and the Bohemian National Alliance to 'monopolise their roles as the only spokesmen for their nations' from October 1915.¹⁴² Such external groups such as the 'Committee of Czechs and Slovaks' in New York that had emerged in the first year of the war subsequently diminished in importance; although this group's decline in activity also reflected the fact that its cause of Czecho-Slovak political union was now central to the Slovak League's wartime agenda.

Slovak American support for the Czechoslovak National Council, 1915-1918

¹⁴⁰ Stolárík, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 43-44; Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision*, p. 183.

¹⁴¹ Stolárík, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 43.

¹⁴² Ference, *Sixteen Months of Indecision*, p. 183.

The Cleveland Agreement established a new nationalist programme for the Slovak League of America and their Czech American participants in the form of an independent and federal Czecho-Slovak state. These migrant organisations sought to join forces with the Czech and Slovak émigré groups campaigning in western Europe and Russia to bring about this outcome from October 1915. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the complex set of organisations and leaders that claimed to represent Czech and Slovak nationalism in each of the leading Entente countries during the war. What needs to be recognised, however, in order to understand how the transatlantic element of this liberation movement took shape, is that the ‘Czechoslovak National Council’ formed by Tomáš Masaryk and based chiefly in France, Britain and Italy had its authority contested by other émigré groups based in Russia for much of the wartime period.¹⁴³ Among those setting out their own political agenda in the east were self-declared representatives of the relatively small, Slovak migrant colony in Russia, including a group formed in Moscow in the spring of 1915 known as the ‘The Slovak-Russian Society in Memory of Ľudovít Štúr’ (*Slovensko-Ruský Spolok Pamäti Ľudovíta Štúra*).¹⁴⁴ Named after the nineteenth century Slovak nationalist leader who did most to establish a political distinction between the Slovak and Czech written languages, this organisation in Russia invoked his memory to express their support for a distinct Slovak nationalist programme from that of the Czechs. The Society was formed by Ján Kvačala, a Slovak professor at the University of Tartu, in modern-day Estonia, who upon founding the body issued a

¹⁴³ See V. M. Fic, *Revolutionary War for Independence and the Russian Question: Czechoslovak Army in Russia, 1914-1918*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977, p. 16-17, p. 24-27; M. Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed*, London: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 29-31; E. Kubů and J. Šouša, *T. G. Masaryk a jeho c. k. protivníci: Českoslovenká zahraniční akce ženevského období v zápase s rakousko-uherskou diplomacií, zpravodajskými službami a propagandou (1915-1916)*, Prague: Univerzita Karlová v Praze, 2015, p. 98-100.

¹⁴⁴ T. Bandžuch, *Slovenské víze: Velká válka, krajané a představy o budoucím státu (1914-1918)*, Prague: Akropolis, 2014, p. 107.

memorandum declaring its opposition to the idea of uniting Czechs and Slovaks in an independent state.¹⁴⁵ The stance of many group members was influenced by their relative ideological conservatism (at least compared to Masaryk's own antipathy towards illiberal, Tsarist Russia) and their desire to join the territory of Upper Hungary to Tsarist Russia as a Slovak 'principality'.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, Gustav Košík, the representative of the Slovak League tasked with coordinating the liberation movement in Russia, reported to his Slovak American colleagues upon his return that Kvačala himself 'declared that he would rather be with the Magyars than the Czechs' in a common state.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, however, the Society entered into formal correspondence with the Slovak League of America, declaring in early 1916 its full support for the principles of Czecho-Slovak union outlined in the Cleveland Agreement.¹⁴⁸ These were two flatly contradictory positions, but this reality did not prevent Slovak League officials from hastily backing the Moscow Slovaks as representatives of their own political program, calling on Czech groups in Russia to 'reach an agreement' with the Society.¹⁴⁹ Armed with formal recognition by the Slovak League, these Moscow-based Slovaks placed their agenda before the Russian Foreign Ministry as the legitimate representatives of Slovaks abroad.¹⁵⁰ Politically active Slovak émigrés in Russia were consequently divided between supporters of

¹⁴⁵ M. Hronský and M. Pekník, *Martinská deklarácia: cesta slovenskej politiky k vzniku Česko-Slovenska*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2008, p. 118.

¹⁴⁶ Idem; Bandžuch, *Slovenské víze*, p. 113.

¹⁴⁷ Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, 'Milan Getting Sr., Professional Materials, 1917', 'Zápisnica štvrťročnej ročnej schôdze Ústredného Výboru Slovenskej Lígy', Pittsburgh, PA, 28 June 1917, f. 31.

¹⁴⁸ *Jednota*, 22 Mar. 1916, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ Idem; Bandžuch, *Slovenské víze*, p. 111.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111, p. 113.

the Czecho-Slovak project and sceptics within the Society of Štúr, who sought incorporation with Russia or a continued future for Slovaks in Hungary.¹⁵¹

The Czecho-Slovak agenda in Russia was pushed forward through the efforts of Milan Štefánik, the chief Slovak member of Masaryk's Czechoslovak National Council as well as Slovak League's delegate Gustav Košík, who established a Russian branch of the National Council loyal to the aims of the émigré leadership in western Europe.¹⁵² These efforts were formalised in August 1916 by the signature and circulation of the 'Kiev Agreement', a manifesto in which these émigrés stated that 'Czechs and Slovaks wish to form a single, indivisible and free Czechoslovak nation, under the support and protection of the Four Powers (Britain, France, Russia and Italy)'.¹⁵³ The claim made in the Kiev Agreement that Czechs and Slovaks formed a unified 'Czechoslovak' nation, rather than distinct Czech and Slovak nations joined by a common political program, caused uproar among many Slovak American groups. The Slovak League's President Albert Mamatey criticised Košík's activities 'for ignoring the individuality of the Slovak nation and for being signed "in the name of the League" without authorisation'.¹⁵⁴ More forthright critics such as Ján Pankuch, editor of the leading Slovak newspaper in Cleveland, called for Košík to be recalled by the Slovak League from Russia and for his signature to the Kiev Agreement to be disavowed by the League's senior officials.¹⁵⁵ As historian Tomáš Bandžuch has shown, the chief effect of the Kiev Agreement was to transfer political

¹⁵¹ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 64-65.

¹⁵² Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, 'Korešpondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920', poč. č. 487, Cablegram, Gustav Košík to Albert Mamatey, Petrograd, 19 Aug. 1916, f. 1; Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 108; Stolárik, 'The Role of the American Slovaks', f. 64-65; Bandžuch, *Slovenské víze*, p. 117.

¹⁵³ Quoted in K. Sidor, 'Zásahy Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike do politického vývinu slovenského (1914-1939)' in M. Šprinc (ed.), *Slovenská Líga v Amerike, Štyridsatročná*, Scranton, PA: Obrana Press, 1947, p. 36.

¹⁵⁴ 'Zápisnica štvrt'ročnej ročnej schôdze Ústredného Výboru Slovenskej Lígy', 28 June 1917, f. 34.

¹⁵⁵ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 54.

support among the Russian émigré groups towards the Czecho-Slovak stance and Masaryk's National Council, even among the Moscow Slovaks.¹⁵⁶ The Society of Štúr changed its own political stance in the context of its declining political influence among Slovaks in Russia. In March 1917, the Society finally declared its own support for 'the liberation of the Slovak nation from the heavy yoke of the Magyars and joining it with the Czechs on the grounds of the pan-Slavic ideal'.¹⁵⁷ At the same time, the hopes placed by conservative émigrés on gaining influence through Russian foreign policy were dashed by the Russian Revolution, which rendered political programs based on attaching Slovakia to the Tsarist empire or the Romanov dynasty redundant overnight.¹⁵⁸ The rise to an effective leadership role of Masaryk's National Council within the Czecho-Slovak movement was gradual, occurring in part due to the divisions that existed among émigré groups in the east before being rapidly accelerated by the outbreak of the Russian revolution.¹⁵⁹ As late as 1916 and after its conclusion of the Cleveland Agreement, the Slovak League of America therefore continued to identify Russia as the principal field of its diplomatic activity and agitation among other Slovak émigré groups rather than Masaryk's group in western Europe.¹⁶⁰ In sending two dignitaries to represent its interests in Europe, the League informed them that:

the main emphasis of activity must be among the upper elements [of society], chiefly and above all else in Russia. The focus of our delegates' political activities must lie in Petrograd and Moscow: where they should pay attention to powerful political statesmen both in and out of

¹⁵⁶ Bandžuch, *Slovenské víze*, p. 118.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Bandžuch, *Slovenské víze*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁸ Heimann, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁶⁰ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 49.

government, strive to arouse their sympathy and confidence [in us], and so gain their active support for our Slovak political claims.¹⁶¹

This activity represented an unforeseen dead end in the Slovak League's activities however, as the revolutionary events of 1917 fatally undermined any political programme in which Russia could act as a liberator and Great Power protector of the Slovaks of Upper Hungary. The most significant effect brought about by sending a delegate to Russia was, somewhat ironically, to promote the Czecho-Slovak cause and in turn to help Masaryk's National Council in western Europe to assume leadership of the liberation movement. It is therefore the contributions made by Slovak American groups to support that organisation which will be studied in greater depth in this chapter.

Slovak Americans provided substantial financial support to liberate their countrymen from Austro-Hungarian rule. The vital role that both the Czech and Slovak migrant colonies could play in funding political agitation was grasped by émigré leaders like Masaryk from an early stage in the war.¹⁶² The myriad tasks involved in setting up a political centre abroad, such as the publication of propaganda booklets setting out the Czecho-Slovak cause, distributing memoranda as well as the cost of conveying messages between the four centres of activity of the Czecho-Slovak National Council – Britain, France, Italy and Russia - quickly mounted up.¹⁶³ The personal wealth of its leading protagonists such as Masaryk and Edvard Beneš, as well as irregular contributions from their sympathisers in the Czech *Maffie* movement in Austria-Hungary were insufficient to meet these costs. As Beneš

¹⁶¹ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 20, inv. č. 931, poč. č. 8, 'Úprava pre slovenských poľných vyslancov Slovenskej Lígy do Európy', Pittsburgh, 24 May 1916, 3/23/4.

¹⁶² Kubů and Šouša, *T. G. Masaryk*, p. 98.

¹⁶³ Idem.

stressed to officers of the Bohemian National Alliance in May 1915, resolving ‘the question of money’ was central to the success of their political campaign.¹⁶⁴ At this stage Masaryk himself reckoned that his political group alone required \$50,000 a year to carry out its activities.¹⁶⁵ While Masaryk and his colleagues often harangued organisations in the United States to send more money and a faster rate, the National Council received over \$100,000 from the Czech American groups alone by the end of 1916.¹⁶⁶

This rate of financial support greatly increased in the final two years of the war in accordance with the activities of the Czechoslovak National Council being broadened towards those of a self-declared ‘government in exile’; Masaryk claimed in his published memoirs that the National Council received \$675,000 in support from compatriots in the United States during the war.¹⁶⁷ Masaryk’s declaration was however designed to conceal at least some of the contributions from migrant groups in the United States; specifically, his figures diminished the importance of Slovak American funding to his cause. Writing as the leader of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, Masaryk claimed that almost all of his money ‘came from the Czechs. During the war the Slovaks gave little, although they sent two hundred thousand dollars [...] after I had become President’.¹⁶⁸ Masaryk was correct to point to the more substantial role played by Czech American groups in financially supporting the earlier stages of his campaign: though it is also worth bearing in mind that Slovak American groups did not formally commit themselves to working with the Czechs at all until the autumn of 1915. The Slovak League had been in a perilous financial

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁶⁵ Idem.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁶⁷ Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, p. 94.

¹⁶⁸ Idem.

state prior to the war and was largely dependent on donations from fraternal societies as well as individual membership subscriptions: as a result it still had less than \$10,000 in funds in September 1917, fully three years into the war.¹⁶⁹ The minutes of the Slovak League's executive body show, however, that it nevertheless sent an equal sum of \$10,000 to support the National Council's activities earlier in that year.¹⁷⁰ The League also contributed on an equal basis with the Bohemian National Alliance to important projects that indirectly helped Masaryk's National Council, such as a joint contribution of \$5,000 to support injured Czech and Slovak volunteers who took part in the Russian 'Kerensky Offensive' of July 1917.¹⁷¹ Most significantly, the League served as a centre through which sums were collected from among the Slovak migrant colony as a whole - all of which were ultimately placed at Masaryk's personal disposal.¹⁷² From 1917, Slovak American groups mobilised their migrant colony by establishing a 'Million Dollar Fund' to bring about the liberation of their countrymen in Europe. The record books of this fund, held by the Slovak Catholic priest and inventor Josef Murgaš, show that the Fund raised \$640,000 for the cause of establishing a Czecho-Slovak state.¹⁷³ As the campaign largely took place in the second half of the war, Masaryk's contention that Slovak American groups sent little money could have conceivably referred to the extent of contributions received during wartime: as the bulk of the 'Million Dollar' funds were not sent to Europe until after the First World War had ended. Yet in September 1918

¹⁶⁹ Fond SLA, č. šk. 2. poč. č. 82, 'Rôzna korešpondencia', Albert Mamatey to Ján Pankuch, Pittsburgh, PA, 4 Dec. 1917, f. 1.

¹⁷⁰ 'Zápisnica štvrtročnej ročnej schôdze Ustredného Výboru Slovenskej Lígy, 28 June 1917, f. 28.

¹⁷¹ Fond SLA, č. šk. 1, 'Korešpondencia Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike', poč. č. 82, Ludvik Fisher to Albert Mamatey, Chicago, IL, 7 July 1917, f. 1.

¹⁷² HSWPA, Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Milan P. Getting, 'Milan Getting, 1878-1951: Czechoslovak Consul, Journalist, Editor, Sokol Organizer, Activist', Bossier City, LA, June 1988., f. 5.

¹⁷³ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 167; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 73.

the records of the Slovak League show that it had already sent \$50,000 from this collection to support the efforts of the National Council; Masaryk personally sent a letter to its President Albert Mamatey acknowledging his receipt of this sum while himself working in the United States for this cause.¹⁷⁴

The Question of Slovak Autonomy in a Czecho-Slovak State: From the Cleveland to the Pittsburgh Agreement

A widespread fervour for a Czecho-Slovak state was demonstrated among both Czech and Slovak American migrants in 1918, through their fundraising campaigns as well as public demonstrations in American cities. What this mass mobilisation of nationalism could not resolve, however, were divisions over the envisaged constitutional structure of the new state. The Cleveland Agreement of October 1915 established a basis for Czech and Slovak cooperation in the United States, by committing its signatory organisations to the goal of a federal state, ruled by a monarch, with full national and political autonomy for Slovakia. This document was not, however, regarded as the last word on the matter by Slovak American leaders, who remained fundamentally split as to what degree of national cooperation with the Czechs should be pursued. Buoyed up by their eventual success in securing an independent Czecho-Slovak state as the stated goal of the Slovak League's wartime

¹⁷⁴ Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, poč. č. 487, 'Korešpondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920', Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk to Albert Mamatey, [Unknown location], 22 Sep. 1918, f. 1.

campaign, the radical and ‘Czechophile’ wing of Slovak American opinion pursued a much closer political union with the Czechs in the envisaged state. The Slovak Sokol officer Milan Getting called on the Slovak League to water down its commitment to Slovak political autonomy, arguing at a meeting in April 1917 that it ‘would discourage the Allies from creating a Czecho-Slovak state, if we lend great weight to this ‘dualism’’.¹⁷⁵ The idea that Slovakia ought to form an autonomous political unit in the new state - occupying a similar position to that of Hungary within Austria-Hungary - was viewed by Getting as a weakness in their campaign for statehood: since the well-publicised constitutional crises that affected the Habsburg dualist state would surely also apply to its successor in central Europe. Getting’s belief that autonomy for Slovakia would weaken Allied support for their project was tied however to his personal support for a closer political union of Czechs and Slovaks in the new state with little to no autonomy for Slovakia.

To prepare the ground for this agenda, Czechophile activists sought to gain a decisive influence within the internal political structure of the Slovak League. In 1916, the congress of the Slovak League was held in Chicago, which allowed Slovak progressive and socialist groups within that city to purchase membership of the organisation at the door and steer the League’s decision-making in a more favourable decision. The resulting Congress sent one of their own, the generally respected lawyer Štefan Osuský, to western Europe to represent the Slovak League’s interests within Masaryk’s Czechoslovak National Council and to make representations to the governments of France and Britain.¹⁷⁶ Following complaints by many of the

¹⁷⁵ Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, ‘Milan Getting Sr., Professional Materials, 1917’, ‘Zápisnica schôdze ústredného Výboru Slovenskej Lígy’, 12 April 1917, Pittsburgh, PA, f. 15.

¹⁷⁶ Getting, ‘Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept’, f. 108; Stolárik, ‘Role of American Slovaks’, f. 47-49.

League's existing members from the eastern states of the United States about their lack of representation, a second congress was held in which Gustav Košík was elected as the League's delegate to Russia, on the basis that Osuský was a Lutheran and so a Slovak Catholic ought to hold the other post. The chief loser from this orchestrated affair was the Slovak League's Lutheran secretary Ivan Daxner, who was denied his wish to travel to Russia and to come to an agreement with Slovak émigrés in opposition to a Czecho-Slovak political union.¹⁷⁷ This was at least what the pro-Czech faction of Slovak American leaders believed - with Getting citing Daxner's views as being 'diametrically opposite to everything that Masaryk proposed' as their reason for sabotaging the secretary's plans.¹⁷⁸ Clearly identified as the chief conservative voice within the Slovak League's hierarchy by its more radical critics, Daxner's authority was directly challenged in the following year by Slovak leaders in Chicago, who ran their own candidate for the secretary position in opposition to Daxner at the Slovak League's congress in February 1917. The Chicago group's candidate was defeated in a vote of its 3400 members, but the result was contested by the Chicago group in the courts: during which time the League's crucial national and political funds were frozen by a court order.¹⁷⁹ When this tactic failed to overturn the election outcome, members of the local Chicago branch of the League raised a separate grievance, accusing Daxner of having mishandled their contributions and again called for him to resign from his post.¹⁸⁰ Daxner was absolved of any wrongdoing by the Slovak League, but soon afterwards resigned as

¹⁷⁷ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 108.

¹⁷⁸ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 108.

¹⁷⁹ AMS, Fond KSZ, č. šk. 15, inv. č. 119, porad. č. 484, Albert Mamatey to Ivan Daxner, Pittsburgh, PA, 9 Aug. 1917, f. 1; Ivan Daxner to Albert Mamatey, Pittsburgh, PA, 15 Aug 1917, f. 3-4; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 78-79.

¹⁸⁰ Getting Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 5, 'Getting, Milan sr., Correspondence, 1917-1923', Milan Getting to Štefan Osuský, New York, 21 Apr. 1917, f. 1;

secretary under the weight of political opposition and personal attacks.¹⁸¹ The selection of Osuský as delegate to Masaryk's Council and the removal of the chief architect of the Slovak Memorandum of 1914 from power represented a significant gain in influence by his Czechophile rivals within the Slovak League.

In the end, Daxner's perceived reluctance to commit to 'liberating' Slovaks from Hungarian rule meant that his downfall was welcomed not only by radical, pro-Czech activists, but leading Catholic journalists as well. The editor of the Catholic *Jednota* newspaper Josef Hušek remarked of Daxner that 'while he is innocent [of the accusations] [...] he was not a fit person to hold his post' - for the Slovak League's secretary 'did not have faith in the Slovak nation' to achieve its full national rights.¹⁸² In his typically overstated manner, Hušek reckoned that the Slovak League secretary's cautious tactics 'would have set back our cause of liberating Slovakia by a hundred years' had they been carried out.¹⁸³ The three years in which this scion of a great Slovak nationalist family held office among Slovak American leaders were turbulent. The political fate of Daxner demonstrates that Slovak Americans in the United States were not willing to defer to leaders from their homeland based on their family's nationalist pedigree. When Slovak American leaders took up the radical agenda of taking their countrymen 'out of Hungary' and into a new state with the Czechs with enthusiasm, they did not hesitate to remove Daxner for being increasingly out of touch with the prevailing sentiment. The rise and fall of the Slovak League's secretary in the space of just three years demonstrates both the assertive, independent nature of the leadership in this migrant

¹⁸¹ Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, 'Korešpondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920', poč. č. 487, Albert Mamatey to M. J. Čajak, Pittsburgh, PA. 11 Aug. 1917, f. 1; Ivan Daxner to Albert Mamatey, Pittsburgh, PA, 15 Aug 1917, f. 6; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 79.

¹⁸² *Jednota*, 19 Sep. 1917, p. 4.

¹⁸³ Idem.

colony, as well as the radicalising effect that the war had on their views of Slovak national rights and statehood.

The growing influence of the Czechophile faction was borne out at the congress of the Slovak League held in New York in February 1918. The assembled members of the League elected Ján Janček as secretary in Daxner's place; while several other new officials who supported a close union with the Czechs were also elected as officials within the organisation.¹⁸⁴ Under Janček's initiative, the Slovak League and their Czech counterparts also agreed to form 'The Czechoslovak National Council in the United States', as a branch of Masaryk's National Council based in western Europe.¹⁸⁵ Possessing an equal representation of Czechs and Slovaks, this body served to coordinate the fundraising activities and agitation of the migrant organisations, while also further committing these migrant bodies to Masaryk's overarching leadership of the Czechoslovak cause.¹⁸⁶ Milan Getting later described this period at the beginning of 1918 as representing 'the peak of success as far as the concept of Czechoslovak national unity is concerned' among Slovak leaders in the United States.¹⁸⁷ His reference to the 'national unity' of 'Czechoslovaks' highlights the perspective of the radical, Czechophile leaders on the Slovak question: joining with the Czechs in a common state was not viewed as merely a desirable or pragmatic political outcome of the war; the new state was also intended to forge an incorporating 'national' culture that would transcend the differences between the two language groups.

¹⁸⁴ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 208.

¹⁸⁵ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 83.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 84.

¹⁸⁷ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 208.

Supporters of a closer union with the Czechs were not however the only Slovak American leaders who sought a new political settlement for the envisaged post-war state. Other Slovak nationalists within the migrant colony viewed a new political agreement as necessary to obtain effective guarantees for Slovak national autonomy within the envisaged Czecho-Slovak state. Sceptics of political cooperation with the Czechs included Jozef Hušek, editor of the largest-selling Slovak American newspaper *Jednota*, as well as Ján Pankuch, editor of the *Denný Hlas* ('Daily Voice') newspaper in Cleveland, who became increasingly alarmed at what one historian sympathetic to their cause has termed 'the implementation of the Czech agenda' within the joint movement for statehood.¹⁸⁸ These newspapers editors pointed to breaches of the spirit of the Cleveland Agreement by Czech American 'chauvinists', whose pronouncements often identified the envisaged state and its institutions as being 'Czech' and held that Slovak was a dialect rather than a distinct language.¹⁸⁹ The *Bohemian Review*, a wartime journal published by Czech leaders in Chicago to propagate the cause of liberation, was criticised by Jozef Hušek for being 'belittling the Slovaks on almost every issue'.¹⁹⁰ In May 1918, Hušek expressed his increasing hostility to the content of this and other journals by declaring that 'we see that all the agitation literature in the French and English language has served and serves one purpose: to convince the world that the Slovaks are truly just a Czech irredenta'.¹⁹¹ For the idea of a 'Great Bohemia' being espoused by Czech leaders in the United States, the *Jednota* editor vowed that 'not one Slovak coin nor drop of

¹⁸⁸ S. J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1995, p. 151.

¹⁸⁹ *Jednota*, 8 Nov. 1916, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ *Jednota*, 22 May 1918, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ *Idem*.

blood will be spent'.¹⁹² In May 1918, Hušek devoted four successive weekly editorials in *Jednota* to setting out the apparent bad faith of Czech leaders, while raising the prospect of Slovaks supporting a federal union of nations in central Europe - even under continued Habsburg rule - rather than 'forming with the Czechs not only one state, but also one nation'.¹⁹³ The purpose of this agitation however was primarily to convince other Slovak political leaders as well as their Czech colleagues that a renewed political agreement was required to ensure their joint partnership, with a reaffirmed autonomy for Slovakia forming the price for future cooperation.

The campaign of Slovak 'autonomists' to secure a more effective guarantee of this goal culminated in the 'Pittsburgh Agreement', which was signed on 31 May 1918. This renewed deal between Czech American groups and the Slovak League - including its most vocal critics of Czech cooperation, including Hušek - included the presence of Masaryk in the room as a signatory and witness to the willingness of the Czechoslovak National Council in western Europe to respect Slovak political autonomy. After spending nearly a year in revolutionary Russia helping to organise the formation of Czecho-Slovak army, Masaryk arrived in the United States in May 1918 with the main aim of gaining the support of the United States for Czechoslovak statehood.¹⁹⁴ On 4 May, the *Chicago Tribune* welcomed him and set out his purpose to American statesmen, declaring that Masaryk 'brings not only the latest authoritative observation of the Russian situation but also a knowledge of the Austro-Hungarian and Balkan complex, which should be of great value to our government and public in forming [a] correct judgement of events and right policies'.¹⁹⁵ Chiefly

¹⁹² *Idem*.

¹⁹³ *Jednota*, 29 May 1918, p. 4.

¹⁹⁴ Odložalik, 'The Czechs', p. 215.

¹⁹⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, 4 May 1918, p. 6.

for his account of the situation in Russia, Masaryk indeed secured a personal audience with President Wilson in Washington D. C. on June 19.¹⁹⁶ Masaryk was also present to witness and participate in the meeting of the Czechoslovak National Council in America, held in Pittsburgh on 30-31 May, which had on its agenda the provision of extra funds for the Czecho-Slovak legions in Europe and diplomatic efforts.¹⁹⁷ At the second day of the meeting these discussions were interrupted by Jozef Hušek, who was not a member of the National Council, but demanded a guarantee of Slovak autonomy within the envisaged new state.¹⁹⁸

As the session of the National Council was interrupted and the Czech American delegates excused themselves from the subsequent debate, the minutes that could establish the precise events of that day do not document the precise discussions that took place on this matter. Eyewitness accounts and historians' descriptions also do not fully agree with one another.¹⁹⁹ While it is possible that Masaryk had already been given a prepared set of Slovak political demands to be fulfilled in the new state the previous day, all sides agree that the leader of the Czechoslovak movement played an active role in drafting what came to be known as the 'Pittsburgh Agreement'.²⁰⁰ The document set down the principles by which as Czechoslovak state ought to be formed; the only major difference in content between it and the vision set out by Czech and Slovak Americans at Cleveland in 1915 was that the new state was now expected to take the form of a republic.²⁰¹ On Slovakia's place within the common state, the Pittsburgh Agreement reaffirmed that it would have 'its own

¹⁹⁶ Odložalik, 'The Czechs', p. 215.

¹⁹⁷ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 227.

¹⁹⁸ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 98.

¹⁹⁹ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 225.

²⁰⁰ Idem; Stolárik, f. 98.

²⁰¹ V. S. Mamatey, 'The Slovaks and Carpatho-Rusyns', p. 237.

state administration' and that the Slovak language would be recognised as 'an official language in schools, in administration and in public life' of the common state.²⁰²

The major point of controversy involved the question of whether Slovakia should also have its own parliament, which was demanded by Hušek as the price of the Catholic Union maintaining its support for the new state.²⁰³ The chief source of dissent for this proposal came from the Slovak members of the National Council, who held a vote and split evenly on whether this demand ought to be included.²⁰⁴ According to Stolárik's account, the deadlock was broken by Masaryk himself, who signalled his willingness to grant Slovakia 'its own parliament' as described by the final draft of the Pittsburgh Agreement.²⁰⁵ Satisfied at this conclusion, Hušek wrote in *Jednota* two weeks later that 'Professor Masaryk and the Czechs have willingly resolved all issues that could lead to distrust towards them. And we must also set aside all matters that have disrupted harmonious cooperation in the liberation movement'.²⁰⁶ Ivan Bielek, a fellow newspaper editor who sought confirmation of Slovak autonomy, explained to his readers that 'Masaryk has clearly set out that Slovaks will be the masters in their own free Slovakia. They will have their own schools, administration, their own free and independent church'.²⁰⁷

The Pittsburgh Agreement differed little in its content from the framework of the new state established by migrant leaders nearly three years earlier. Its value to

²⁰² The final draft of the Pittsburgh Agreement was recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Czechoslovak National Council in America. See M. Votruba, 'Pittsburgh Agreement', University of Pittsburgh, Slovak Studies Program, <http://www.pitt.edu/~votruba/qsonhist/pittsburghagreement.html> (accessed 18 July 2017).

²⁰³ Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 98.

²⁰⁴ Idem.

²⁰⁵ Idem.

²⁰⁶ *Jednota*, 12 June 1918, p. 4.

²⁰⁷ *Národné Noviny*, 6 June 1918, p. 4.

Slovak American leaders who favoured the greatest extent of autonomy for Slovakia rested chiefly on Masaryk's apparent consent - as the leading representative of the Czecho-Slovak independence movement - to that goal. Supporters of Slovak autonomy within the migrant colony were to be greatly disappointed in this respect. Crucially, a clause was inserted into the agreement stating that 'detailed regulations' about the new state would be determined by 'the freed Czechs and Slovaks and their legally established leaders' in Europe, rather than in the United States.²⁰⁸ This proviso allowed those wary of providing full autonomy to Slovakia a convenient means of disavowing the Pittsburgh Agreement as the basis for the post-war Czechoslovak Republic. Masaryk himself later claimed that 'it was laid down that the details of the Slovak political problem would be settled by the legal representatives of the Slovak people themselves, just as [...] the Constitution itself would be finally determined by the legal representatives of the people. And so it was. The Constitution was adopted by the Slovaks as well as the Czechs'.²⁰⁹ On this basis, Masaryk was able to dismiss the Pittsburgh Agreement as merely a document that 'was concluded in order to appease a small Slovak faction which was dreaming of God knows what sort of independence for Slovakia'.²¹⁰ In short, Masaryk argued that the Slovak American leaders who sought a Slovak parliament were extremists with no right to make claims on behalf of their countrymen in Europe, who subsequently rejected them anyway. As this study will show, Masaryk's account only applied to some of the Slovak nationalist leaders in the immediate aftermath of the war; whereas, during the war, the mandate claimed by Masaryk's National Council to speak for the Slovaks' nationalist aims rested almost entirely on the support of

²⁰⁸ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 226.

²⁰⁹ Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, p. 209.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

Slovak migrant organisations in the United States. Masaryk's memoirs went to great lengths to diminish the importance of these Slovak American groups to the liberation movement, further claiming for example that the Slovak League was not recognised as a chartered organisation and so 'existed only in name'. These were attempts to minimise his political embarrassment for signing the agreement with Slovak Americans, whose legitimacy he clearly recognised at the time.²¹¹

The later political rejection of the Pittsburgh Agreement also rested on a loose interpretation of what the clause meant by leaving the 'detailed regulations' of the new state to Czech and Slovak politicians in Europe. The verdicts of Slovak American leaders such as Jozef Hušek and Bielek in the aftermath of the Pittsburgh Agreement show that they did not believe that the entire constitution of the new state fell into this category. Rather, these supporters of Slovak autonomy felt that their agreement struck in the United States had ensured that Slovaks would be 'masters in their own free Slovakia'.²¹² Indeed, it would have made no sense for Slovak American leaders to set out a basic constitutional structure for the new state in the Pittsburgh Agreement - that the new state ought to be a republic and that Slovakia should have certain rights - if these clauses could be simply rendered obsolete by the decisions of Czech and Slovak politicians in Europe. That this clause was inserted into the document with no recorded dissent points to a much narrower interpretation of its meaning at the time. It is apparent that many Slovak American leaders thought that the 'detailed regulations' to be left to Czech and Slovak politicians meant establishing the powers of a legislature, the function of district governments and court systems in a new state – 'detailed regulations' through which the ideas of the

²¹¹ Masaryk, *The Making of a State*, p. 210.

²¹² *Národné Noviny*, 6 June 1918, p. 4.

Pittsburgh Agreement could be implemented in good faith. The subsequent decades of controversy that have surrounded the Pittsburgh Agreement can therefore be explained to a large degree by the Slovak American leaders' misplaced faith in Masaryk. Masaryk and opponents of extensive Slovak autonomy - including the Czechophile faction of Slovak Americans represented within the Czechoslovak National Council in America - attached an entirely different meaning to the Pittsburgh Agreement than its instigators such as Jozef Hušek. It was difficult for supporters of the Pittsburgh Agreement to uphold it as legally binding upon all politicians of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic, but as R. W. Seton-Watson argued, the document contained a 'moral value' that ought at least to have compelled Masaryk himself to seek its implementation in that state.²¹³ Masaryk was not obliged to agree to the Pittsburgh Agreement in its draft form in May 1918 - the Slovak representatives themselves could not agree on the matter of a separate Slovak parliament - but chose to give his consent to a political programme that he did not later uphold. The Pittsburgh Agreement therefore served the interests of Masaryk's National Council at the time by consolidating the support of wavering Slovak nationalist leaders in the United States. The document soon re-emerged, however, as the centrepiece of campaigns for Slovak autonomy that were to undermine Masaryk's vision of a united, Czechoslovak state during his presidency of the interwar republic.

The pledges contained within the Pittsburgh Agreement were sufficient to unite Slovak American groups behind a final push to liberate their countrymen in Europe. Political goals such as Slovak being an official language in administration

²¹³ R. W. Seton-Watson, *The New Slovakia*, Prague: F. R. Borový, 1924, p. 30-31.

and in schools had been a distant prospect to Slovak leaders on both sides of the Atlantic at the beginning of the war, while a separate Slovak administration and parliament were rarely mentioned as part of the nationalist manifesto. Slovak American leaders diverted their attention to achieving them on behalf of their countrymen in Europe through a final push of fundraising to Masaryk's National Council and public agitation in the United States. One month after the conclusion of the Pittsburgh Agreement, Masaryk's Czecho-Slovak National Council was granted recognition as representative of the Czechs and Slovaks by the French government, and received the same degree of recognition by the British soon afterwards.²¹⁴ The United States' government went further in September 1918 by declaring Masaryk's group to be a '*de facto* belligerent government' in the war; on which basis the claims of the Czechoslovak National Council could be directed against Austria-Hungary in the latter's desperate pursuit of peace terms.²¹⁵ When Emperor Charles issued a programme calling for the federal reform of Austria-Hungary, Masaryk rushed to publish a drafted declaration of independence in the American press on 18 October to forestall acceptance of this plan as a condition of Austria-Hungary's armistice.²¹⁶ Prior to the political revolution in Prague that officially marked the birth of Czechoslovakia on 28 October 1918, Czechs and Slovaks had already won *de facto* recognition of this new state from abroad. The bulk of the territory of Upper Hungary was claimed by the new regime in Prague and by the Czechoslovak National Council abroad as 'Slovakia' - a national homeland for the Slovak-speaking majority of its multilingual population.

²¹⁴ H. L. Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2004, p. 170.

²¹⁵ *Idem*.

²¹⁶ G. J. Kovtun, *The Czechoslovak Declaration of Independence: A History of the Document*. Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1985, p. 34.

Conclusion

That the First World War profoundly shaped the course of Slovak nationalism is not a novel conclusion; nor does it apply solely to the Slovak national movement. Many similar groups benefited (or in the case of Magyar nationalism, lost substantial portions of 'their' territory and Magyar-speakers from Hungary to neighbouring states) as an outcome of the war and its subsequent redrawing of the political map of central and eastern Europe. While most nationalist movement aimed against Austria-Hungary during the war relied to some extent on émigré political leadership and support from migrants abroad, the Slovak case study is notable for both the degree of support offered by Slovak American organisations and the great political effect that this brought about. Unlike groups such as the Czech Americans, who possessed a relatively influential national movement in Austria and were more numerous in the United States, Slovak Americans were much faster at setting out a political stance on the war through the collective means of the Slovak League of America. This was because Slovak nationalism was already a highly transatlantic political movement before 1914, in which Slovak migrant organisations held a substantial stake as well as influence over the nationalist politics in Upper Hungary. Indeed, Slovak Americans were already in the process of drafting a memorandum expressing nationalist demands on behalf of their countrymen at home before the war broke out. It was therefore relatively straightforward for Slovak leaders in the United States to assume leadership of the national movement, once Slovak nationalist politicians in Hungary opted to abandon their political activities and to support the war effort. The

activity of Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary to bring about a Czecho-Slovak state in the closing months of the war will be accounted for in the following chapter, but it is not an exaggeration to state that the political impetus for the idea of an independent, common state with the Czechs stemmed almost exclusively from Slovak American leaders.

The programme for Czecho-Slovak statehood did not form the basis of the Slovak League's relatively cautious Memorandum of 1914. This first Memorandum called for Slovak national autonomy in any political state form in central Europe that would be willing to guarantee their rights. The clearly-expressed hostility of Slovak American leaders to Austria-Hungary's war effort against the 'Slav' states of Serbia and Russia served however to radicalise the Slovak American leadership in pursuing an active political campaign against their former state of origin, and ultimately to back a highly ambitious plan to join with the Czechs in an independent state. This idea was agitated for from the beginning of the war by a distinct minority of pro-Czech leaders within the Slovak American community. Many of these leaders, and most prominently Milan Getting and Ignác Gessay, had established close links with their ideological counterparts in the 'Hlasist' group of Slovak nationalists at home. During the war, these essentially secular Slovak nationalists in the United States linked with their Czech counterparts – in the joint political groups of New York, as well as the Bohemian National Alliance - to agitate for independent Czecho-Slovak statehood as the wartime goal of the migrant colony. These groups also sought close cooperation with Masaryk, a highly regarded figure among the Hlasist faction at home and whose National Council in western Europe was more liberal and progressive than the Czech and Slovak groups operating within Tsarist Russia. When

Czech and Slovak Americans reached a common programme for independent statehood in November 1915, their activities and funds were in practice - and despite the reservations of many Slovak migrant leaders - directed intensively towards Masaryk's group rather than their Russian counterparts. The political idea that won the consistent support of Slovak American leaders throughout the wartime period was the achievement of autonomy for Slovakia. By setting this goal of Slovak autonomy as part of the envisaged Czechoslovak state, the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Agreements established and then reaffirmed the commitment of Slovak Americans to a political union with the Czechs in a common, essentially federal state, as opposed to a national union of Czechs and Slovaks as a single, 'Czechoslovak' nation. The failure of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938) to deliver autonomy to Slovakia would have a significant effect on Slovak American goodwill towards the new state during the interwar period.

Chapter 7: The Campaign for Slovak Autonomy and the Decline of Transatlantic Slovak Nationalism, 1918-1920

On 30 October 1918, Slovak politicians assembled at Martin - as a previous generation of nationalists had done so in 1861 - to determine a new basis of Slovak political nationalism at the end of the First World War. The publicly issued outcome of this assembly - 'The Declaration of the Slovak Nation' - endorsed the creation of a Czecho-Slovak state to which the 'Slovak branch of the single, Czecho-Slovak nation... living in the borders of Hungary' ought to be joined.¹ While the 103 signatories to the document could not feasibly claim to represent the Slovak-speaking population of Upper Hungary as a whole, they had a fair claim to representing the small but critically important group of political activists who had campaigned for Slovak national rights within Hungary before 1914.² The delegates nominated a Slovak National Council, in which the traditional Slovak National Party leadership, Hlasist and clerical Catholic nationalists, as well as Slovak Social Democrats were granted representation.³ In this manner, the Slovak National Council brought together all of the major factions that had engaged with the 'Slovak Question' in pre-war Hungary. This National Council declared itself the sole authority to voice the political will of the Slovak nation, and called upon the international community to recognise the will of Slovaks in accordance with the principle of national self-determination.⁴ The Declaration of the Slovak Nation proved to be a decisive turning point in the history of Slovak nationalism. Slovak politicians no longer sought to

¹ SNA, O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č 207, počet č. 17, 'Deklarácia Slovenského Národa', Martin, 30 Oct. 1918, 226/9.

² *Národné Noviny*, 31 Oct. 1918, p. 1-2.

³ SNA, Fond Slovenská Národná Rada [SNR], 1918-1919, č. šk. 1, inv. č. 1, 'Zápisnice z národného zhromaždenia 30. októbra 1918 v Martine', Martin, 30 Oct. 1918, f. 10.

⁴ 'Deklarácia Slovenského Národa', 226/9.

accomplish their national objectives within the Kingdom of Hungary or within the wider framework of the Habsburg Empire, but for the most part worked towards their political objectives within a Czecho-Slovak state during the following two decades. The goal of attaining Slovak rights within a multinational Hungary, which had been the orthodox position of Slovak nationalism before 1914, did not emerge from the First World War as an influential political idea.

The assembly of Slovak political representatives at Martin did not however conclude with the Declaration of the Slovak Nation, which had presented a commonly agreed set of Slovak political goals. On 31 October 1918, the first meeting of the Slovak National Council's Executive Committee resolved to defer the question of political autonomy in the new state, both to Slovakia and at a county level.⁵ The Executive Committee agreed that such issues should be resolved at a later date within the framework of the Czechoslovak state, but it did not come to this conclusion without notable discord.⁶ Matúš Dula, the leader of the Slovak National Party, argued that the question of political autonomy for Slovakia ought to be determined by both Slovak and Czech representatives.⁷ Dula envisioned the creation of a Constitutional Assembly, which was indeed established by the new Czecho-Slovak state and met in Prague until February 1920 to determine the constitution of the new state. Ferdiš Juriga, the sole remaining Slovak national delegate within the Hungarian Parliament, opposed this view and called for a guarantee of 'the legal individuality of the Slovak nation' within the Czecho-Slovak state, prior to Slovak

⁵ Fond SNR, č. šk. 1, inv. č. 1, 'Znáčky zasadnutia Výkonného výboru Slovenskej Národnej Rady, 31.10.1918 v Martin', Martin, 31 Oct. 1918, f. 1.

⁶ M. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2001, p. 63.

⁷ 'Znáčky zasadnutia Výkonného výboru SNR, f. 1-2.

politicians joining a constitutional assembly.⁸ Juriga also expressed his support for a federal state, with an autonomous administration in Slovakia.⁹ Emil Stodola similarly called for a ‘guarantee and an internationally-determined deadline’ for Slovak autonomy within a Czecho-Slovak state, with this nationalist leader looking to the forthcoming international peace conference to impose this requirement.¹⁰ Criticising the airing of such demands within the National Council’s Executive Committee, Stodola’s fellow politician Matej Metod Bella expressed his sorrow that while ‘yesterday we had declared ourselves as one nation [...] now it can be seen that there is no consensus’.¹¹

The immediate emergence of discord over the constitutional status of Slovakia and the Slovak nation within the newly declared, Czecho-Slovak state was significant. It pointed to the beginning of a process by which the pre-war, transatlantic Slovak national movement broke down in the immediate interwar period. In its place emerged a pluralistic form of Slovak politics: in which a range of Slovak political parties openly contested the relationship between the Slovak nation and the Czechs, and the degree to which constitutional and political rights ought to be provided to the territory of Slovakia within a common, Czecho-Slovak state. The guarantees of Slovak language rights in county administration, official communication, courts and in the education system of Slovakia, provided by the Czechoslovak state from 1920, marked for some leaders of the pre-war Slovak national movement a satisfactory resolution to the ‘Slovak Question’. On the other hand, the clerical, Slovak People’s Party and, from 1921, the re-established Slovak

⁸ ‘Znáčky zasadnutia Výkonného výboru SNR, f. 1-2.

⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 2.

¹¹ *Idem.*

National Party in Martin as well, called for an autonomous administration and parliament in Slovakia as the culmination of Slovak national rights within a federal, Czecho-Slovak state.¹² The broad Slovak national movement that had existed before the First World War split on this question of Slovak autonomy, that played a major role in framing Slovak politics during the lifetime of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938), as well as its successor republics until Czechoslovakia's dissolution in 1992.

The question of why Slovak autonomy emerged as a key source of political conflict in the interwar Czechoslovak Republic has been discussed extensively within the existing historiography. An earlier generation of historians typically viewed the Slovak autonomy movement as being primarily a conflict between 'national' groups of Slovaks against Czechs for political power within the interwar Czechoslovak state.¹³ Even more recently, one Slovak historian has alluded to the centralising political ideology of the new state as contributing to 'the oppression of the Slovak nation in the Czechoslovak Republic'.¹⁴ In contrast to this approach, some historians have stressed the role of bitter and 'highly personal' rivalries between nationalist leaders in Slovakia, in leading to the cause of autonomy for Slovakia being taken up by a faction of disillusioned and politically marginalised Slovak

¹² Š. Kucík, 'Príspevok Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike k Autonomistickému Hnutiu na Slovensku v Rokoch 1918-1938', in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 25, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2008, p. 81-82.

¹³ See, for example, from the 'Czechoslovak' school of historiography: J. F. N. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia: A Short History*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971, p. 154-155; J. Korbelt, *Twentieth Century Czechoslovakia: The Meanings of Its History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, p. 86-87, p. 101-103, p. 109; E. Bosák, 'Slovaks and Czechs: An Uneasy Existence', in H. G. Skilling (ed.), *Czechoslovakia, 1918-1988: Seventy Years from Independence*, Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991, p. 74-75. From the Slovak nationalist historiography, see also: S. J. Kirschbaum, 'The Slovak People's Party: The Politics of Opposition, 1918-1938', in S. J. Kirschbaum (ed.), *Slovak Politics: Essays on Slovak History in Honour of Joseph M. Kirschbaum*, Cleveland, OH: Slovak Institute, 1983, p. 162, p. 170-174; S. J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*, New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1995, p. 151.

¹⁴ M. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2001, p. 63.

leaders within the Czechoslovak state: including most prominently the priest politician Andrej Hlinka.¹⁵ The more recent historiography stresses the ideological divisions that existed among Slovak nationalist leaders on autonomy: as the debate held by the Slovak National Council on the matter on 31 October 1918, set out at the beginning of this chapter, clearly demonstrated. As historian Ismo Neumi has described the founding years of the Czechoslovak Republic, its multinational population were ‘divided into different camps [...] according to their political convictions [...] [and] the same could be said of the Slovak national intelligentsia’.¹⁶ While Neumi is correct to note this break in the pre-war, Slovak national coalition, this chapter will show how the same hardening of political divisions could be observed among Slovaks in the United States at the same time. The efforts of the Slovak American leadership to implement the terms of the Pittsburgh Agreement in the new Czecho-Slovak state in fact played a key role in causing this schism to form within the national politics of Slovakia during the interwar period.

This chapter will show how this schism within the Slovak national movement developed in both centres of Slovak nationalist activity – the migrant colony in the United States and the newly established, ‘national’ homeland of Slovakia - in the aftermath of the successful ‘liberation’ of Slovak-speakers from Hungarian rule in 1918. As copies of the Pittsburgh Agreement were brought to Slovakia by delegates of the Slovak League of America in 1919, the document was taken up by supporters of Slovak autonomy, who claimed that the document represented a morally binding

¹⁵ V. L. Benes, ‘Czechoslovak Democracy and its Problems, 1918-1920’, in V. S. Mamatey and R. Luža, *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 75-76. See also R. W. Seton-Watson, *The New Slovakia*, Prague: F. R. Borový, 1924, p. 24.

¹⁶ I. Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism and National Identity, 1918-1920: Manifestations of the National Identity of Slovaks*, Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1999, p. 180-1.

obligation upon the Czecho-Slovak central government. In much the same way that transatlantic links between these rival, Slovak political factions contributed to heightened conflict between Slovak nationalists in the 'old country' before 1914, this chapter will show how the active support of opposing factions within the Slovak American migrant colony helped to polarise Slovak national politics within the interwar Czechoslovak Republic. The polemic attacks of Slovak American journalists on one another and on rival politicians in the 'old country' exacerbated the bitter, personal rivalries that existed between nationalist leaders in Slovakia. Political discord among Slovak leaders in the 'old country' then fed back to Slovak American organisations in time, leading to their collective political body, the Slovak League of America, itself foundering on the divisive issue of Slovak autonomy by the end of 1920. The campaign for Slovak autonomy developed within a restored, transatlantic Slovak national movement in 1919-20, and its significance to the inter-war politics of the Czechoslovak state must be understood in that context.

The Formation of 'Slovakia' in National Revolution, October 1918-January 1919

Before turning to the role that the Slovak American migrant colony played in Slovak national politics, it is necessary to assess the impact of the Slovak nationalist revolution that helped to transform 'Upper Hungary' into 'Slovakia' and secure that territory for the newly declared Czecho-Slovak state from October 1918. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive analysis of Slovakia in nationalist revolution: such a large and complex topic has been subject to the

attention of entire monographic works in recent years.¹⁷ This section will instead focus on the division among Slovak nationalist leaders on the question of political autonomy, which became established as a new ‘Slovak Question’ within the interwar Czechoslovak state. To understand how political autonomy became such a highly contested issue in the Slovak national movement on both sides of the Atlantic, the process by which the new ‘Slovakia’ was integrated into the Czechoslovak state must first be understood. While Slovak nationalists assembled at Martin created a Slovak National Council in October 1918 to direct this process; at the same time in Prague a group of largely Czech revolutionaries set up their own political organisations to achieve this goal. This section will show how the efforts of the Slovak National Council as well as Prague-based political organisations shaped the integration of Slovakia into the new state. It will demonstrate how these state building efforts became politicised under the ‘Ministry for Slovakia’, which became the uncontested political authority for the territory between January 1919 and the first elections being held in Slovakia in May 1920. This contest for political power in Slovakia took place and was resolved prior to Slovak American being able to intervene in homeland affairs. Accounts of the progress of the national revolutions in Austria-Hungary were delayed and often rendered irrelevant by the pace of events. The Declaration of the Slovak Nation, for example, was not published to a Slovak American audience until December 1918, some six weeks after it had been set out by nationalist leaders at Martin.¹⁸ Czechoslovak politicians in Prague and the Slovak National Council in Martin therefore enjoyed a free hand to influence the integration of Slovakia into the new Czechoslovak state without the input of Slovak American groups, and therefore

¹⁷ See Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*; N. Krajčovičová, *Slovensko na ceste k demokracii*, Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV: 2009.

¹⁸ *Jednota*, 11 Dec. 1918, p. 4.

set the context in which the transatlantic movement for Slovak autonomy consequently developed during 1919 and 1920.

One of the chief forces contributing to Slovak division on the autonomy question was the politically divisive manner by which the Slovakia was integrated into the interwar Czechoslovak state. In the autumn of 1918, essentially parallel political organisations were established in the declared Czechoslovak capital in Prague and by the Slovak National Council to direct events in Slovakia. On 28 October, as the political conditions of Austria-Hungary deteriorated and its imperial authorities accepted Allied conditions for a general armistice, a group of Czech nationalist leaders launched a coup against the Austrian officials in Prague and declared the independence of a Czechoslovak state.¹⁹ Through the use of hastily formed revolutionary guard units, this ‘Czechoslovak National Committee’ secured control of key buildings such as the city of Prague’s grain stores; the imperial authorities generally acquiesced in this transfer of power and no bloodshed occurred.²⁰ The Czechoslovak National Committee then asserted its right to govern the entire territory of the new Czechoslovak state, in accordance with its support for the wartime campaign for independent statehood led by Masaryk. The Committee's first decree consequently upheld for the time being the validity of all existing imperial laws and administrative procedures in the formerly ‘Austrian’ provinces of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.²¹ In contrast to this, however, the decree also instructed Czechoslovak officials in Slovakia to administer the territory in the Slovak

¹⁹ J. Opočenský, *The Collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Rise of the Czechoslovak State*, Prague: Orbis, 1928, p. 94-98; M. Heimann, *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed*, London: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 38.

²⁰ *Idem.*

²¹ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 8, inv. č. 571, poč. č. 4, ‘Zákon vydaný Narodným výborom dňa 28 októbra 1918’, Prague, 28 Oct. 1918, 8/48/1.

language and in accordance with the Hungarian Nationality Law of 1868, rather than maintaining the existing, Magyar-language practice of Hungarian administration.²² Having established its control over the bulk of Bohemia and Moravia, the Prague-based authorities convened the ‘Czecho-Slovak National Assembly’ in the capital on 14 November - a body which remained in session until February 1920 to determine the constitution of the new state.²³ A group of nearly sixty delegates known as the Club of Slovak Politicians (*Klub Slovenských Poslancov*) or the ‘Slovak Club’ in shorthand, was tasked with representing the interests of Slovakia in the National Assembly.²⁴ Contrary to the expectations of the Slovak National Council’s leadership in Martin, its own Executive Committee did not form the basis of political representation in the Slovak Club at Prague.²⁵ Mandates to the Slovak Club were instead controlled by the new state authorities in Prague, and from December 1918 through its self-declared ‘Ministry for Slovakia’.²⁶ As an immediate consequence of the convention of the Czechoslovak National Assembly, many Slovak politicians - including Milan Hodža, Milan Ivanka and Ľudovít Medvecký - left Martin and the Slovak National Council to secure their own place within the Slovak Club in Prague.²⁷ The creation of institutional bodies such as the Czecho-Slovak National Assembly therefore created an alternative basis of political legitimacy for Slovak leaders within the new state, that did not align with the activities of the Slovak National Council. Rather, as the historian Marián Hronký describes it, the revolutionary activities of the Prague-based National Committee and the remaining

²² ‘Zákon vydaný Narodným výborom dňa 28 októbra 1918’, 8/48/1.

²³ J. Baer, *A Life Dedicated to the Republic: Vavro Šrobár’s Czechoslovakism*, Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2014, p. 70.

²⁴ J. Bartl et. al., (trans. D. P. Daniel), *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2002, p. 123.

²⁵ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 86-87.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁷ *Idem.*

leaders of the Slovak National Council in Martin came to represent ‘two independent bodies, which did not cooperate closely’.²⁸

The rivalry between these two revolutionary bodies extended to the practical administration of Slovakia, within the borders of the nascent Czechoslovak state. The Czecho-Slovak National Committee moved to administer Slovakia directly through Slovak politicians who were present in Prague at the time of the 28 October coup and who supported the Prague Committee’s claim to authority within the new state. The Committee assigned the task of setting up its provisional government for Slovakia to the Slovak nationalist Vavro Šrobár on 4 November 1918.²⁹ Šrobár had arrived in Prague from his hometown of Ružomberok on the morning of 28 October and became caught up in the coup launched by Czech nationalists in the city.³⁰ Šrobár was invited to attend a meeting of the National Committee later that day and was co-opted as a member of the Committee’s Presidium; as a result, Šrobár became the sole Slovak signatory of the committee’s declaration of Czechoslovak independence, which was pronounced to an assembled crowd in Prague that evening.³¹ From this position of high political office in the new Czecho-Slovak state, Šrobár led the state building process in Slovakia between 1918 and 1920. His task of establishing a provisional, Czecho-Slovak administration for Slovakia was soon shared with his Slovak political allies in the ‘Hlasist’ faction, such as Anton Štefánek, Ivan Dérer and Pavol Blaho.³² These Slovak politicians left Prague with a small group of armed volunteers and on 6 November established their seat of administration in Skalica, a

²⁸ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 85.

²⁹ Baer, *Vavro Šrobár’s Czechoslovakism*, p. 69; Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*, p. 77;

³⁰ V. Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko: Pamäti z Rokov, 1918-1920*, Vol. I, Prague: Čin, 1928, p. 190.

³¹ ‘Zákon vydaný Narodným výborom dňa 28 októbra 1918’, 8/48/1.

³² Šrobár, *Oslobodené Slovensko*, p. 190; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 85.

small town in Slovakia that bordered the Prague National Committee's own centre of power in Moravia and Bohemia.³³ Their caretaker government was sanctioned by the National Assembly in Prague on 7 December and named the 'Ministry for Slovakia' within the new Czechoslovak regime.³⁴ As 'Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakia', Šrobár possessed the sole executive power to appoint and replace government administrators and to direct their activities across Slovakia, as well as the right to censor the press and public organisations throughout the territory.³⁵ This office gave Šrobár a wide range of essentially dictatorial powers - with the goal of firmly establishing the authority of the Prague-based, Czechoslovak regime in Slovakia.

The Slovak National Council also sought to establish its authority to govern Slovakia in the autumn of 1918 from its own centre of political power in Martin. Following its assembly of Slovak political leaders in October 1918, the Slovak National Council declared itself as the legitimate authority to govern the entire population of Slovakia: a right that the Council claimed for itself on behalf of the Czechoslovak state. Its published decree of 3 November asserted that 'every citizen on the lands of Slovakia is obliged to unconditionally submit to the rule of the National Council'.³⁶ The National Council sought to establish its rule at a local level by instructing existing county and district assemblies to establish local Slovak councils, whose activities were to be coordinated by the central Slovak leadership in Martin.³⁷ The Slovak National Council called on all former Hungarian citizens on the territory of 'Slovakia' to follow the instructions of both local and national Slovak

³³ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 57.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³⁵ Baer, *Vavro Šrobár's Czechoslovakism*, p. 73.

³⁶ Fond SNR, č. šk. 1, inv. č. 4, 'Spisy november 1918', 'Ohlas Slovenskej Národnej Rady', Martin, 3 Nov. 1918, f. 1.

³⁷ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 78-9.

National Council representatives and to desist from acts of looting and public disorder.³⁸ In order to further this outcome, the decree banned the sale of alcoholic spirits in Slovakia - a measure that was later confirmed by the Prague administration when it came to fully govern the territory.³⁹ The Slovak National Council instructed disbanded and deserted soldiers from the Austro-Hungarian army to report to enlist in military service under the Slovak National Council.⁴⁰ The Slovak National Council decree made one distinction between Slovaks and other nationalities such as Germans, Magyars and Jews under its authority, by calling on Slovaks to contribute funds to the Slovak National Council's central treasury in Martin.⁴¹ As this wide-ranging set of decrees shows, the leaders of the Slovak National Council such as the Slovak National Party chairman, Matúš Dula, viewed the organisation as a politically sovereign body. The Council claimed that its decrees in governing Slovakia were issued 'with the authorisation of the central government in Prague' but in practice no such recognition was sought and the Martin-based authorities acted alone.⁴² There existed two, independent 'Czechoslovak' authorities that were active in Slovakia during the autumn of 1918: the Prague-supported administration of Šrobár based in Skalica; and the Slovak National Council in Martin. While coordination between these bodies was of a limited nature, they were not adversaries pursuing divergent political agendas. The efforts of the Slovak National Council to quickly establish its authority should be understood for the most part as an attempt by Slovak nationalist leaders to integrate Slovakia into a common state on their own terms. If the Slovak

³⁸ 'Ohlas Slovenskej Národnej Rady', f. 1.

³⁹ Idem; SNA, Fond Klub Slovenských Poslancov (KSP), č. šk. 2, inv. č. 354, 'Spolotovarníkov na likéry a páleníkov na ovocia na Slovensku to KSP, 'Memorandum o zákaze výčapu liehových nápojov na Slovensku', Bratislava, 4 Nov. 1919, ff. 1-5.

⁴⁰ 'Ohlas Slovenskej Národnej Rady', f. 1.

⁴¹ Idem.

⁴² Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 73.

National Council could have established its own political authority over Slovakia, its leadership would be able to uphold their claim to be the sole political representatives of the Slovak national movement within the new Czecho-Slovak state.

Under the slogan of ‘Everything for the Nation!’, the Slovak National Council attempted to establish its own political authority throughout Slovakia/Upper Hungary.⁴³ By the end of 1918, some 300 local branches of the Slovak National Councils were created under its authority.⁴⁴ The activity of these local national council branches was concentrated in the county of Turiec - in which the Council’s seat of Martin was located - as well as in neighbouring Liptov and northern Trenčín counties in central Slovakia.⁴⁵ The National Council’s aim of building a comprehensive network of loyal branch councils across the entire territory of Slovakia, ‘from Prešporok [Pressburg] to Užhorod’, was however unfulfilled.⁴⁶ Efforts to create national councils in eastern Slovakia in particular were hampered by the establishment of rival bodies that declared the loyalty of their local towns and districts to the Hungarian state.⁴⁷ One such body, the Eastern Slovak Council, was formed in the town of Prešov/Eperjes in November 1918 and declared the loyalty of the eastern counties of the former Upper Hungary to the Budapest government.⁴⁸ Its leader, a pro-Hungarian journalist and politician named Viktor Dvorcsák, made this body’s claim on behalf of the ‘Slovjak’ population - which this Eastern Slovak Council declared to be a linguistic nation, distinct from the Slovak-speakers of

⁴³ ‘Ohlas Slovenskej Národnej Rady’, f. 1.

⁴⁴ Fond SNR č. šk. 2, inv. č. 7, ‘Zoznam oblasti, ktoré súhlasia so Slovenskou národnou radou a kde sú ľudia schopní pracovať v prospech Slovenska’, Martin, [Nov 1918], f. 1; Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*, p. 46.

⁴⁵ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 79.

⁴⁶ Idem.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 80.

⁴⁸ Heimann, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 41.

western Upper Hungary.⁴⁹ Further, pro-Hungarian councils were established in the counties of Spiš and Orava.⁵⁰ In the eastern districts of Slovakia, these pro-Hungarian national councils often represented the only council of their type, in the absence of any Slovak National Council branches.⁵¹ Across Slovakia as a whole, rival national councils were established to contest the loyalty of their district to either a Czechoslovak or Hungarian political future. In prominent towns of central Slovakia such as Žilina and Tisovec/Tiszolc, the local branches of the Slovak National Council were initially formed in response to the creation of rival Hungarian bodies by town officials.⁵² Even the town of Martin itself - the seat of the Slovak National Council - formed the base of a rival 'Hungarian National Council of Turiec County' that was declared on 4 November: the Hungarian body's leaders included the local deputy sheriff.⁵³ The model of a national council as a legitimate representation of local state loyalties was therefore undermined by the manner in which these organisations proliferated in the disputed, multinational territory of Slovakia/Upper Hungary in the autumn of 1918. While the Slovak National Council extended its own base of political support through the creation of local subordinate bodies, rival pro-Hungarian groups challenged the claim of these Slovak nationalists to determine the political future of both Upper Hungary and individual localities. This undermined the Slovak National Council's self-declared political sovereignty and the claim made by both Czechoslovak diplomats and Slovak nationalists alike that Upper Hungary constituted a single, Slovak national homeland.

⁴⁹ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 109;

⁵⁰ *Idem.*

⁵¹ Neumi, *Slovakia - A Playground for Nationalism*, p. 57.

⁵² Fond SNR, č. šk. 1, inv. č. 2, 'Zápisnica spísaná o II. zasadnutí výkonného výboru Slovenskej Národnej Rady, ktoré zadržané bolo dňa 4.11.1918 v Liptovskom Ružomberku', Ružomberok, 4 Nov. 1918, f. 1-2; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 77.

⁵³ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 75.

The creation of two competing, 'Czecho-Slovak' political bodies to govern Slovakia did not take place in a benign domestic and international context. The attempts of the self-declared authorities in Prague and Martin to secure 'Slovakia' for the new state was contested by a new Hungarian regime in Budapest, headed by Count Mihaly Károlyi and established on 31 October 1918.⁵⁴ On 16 November, the Károlyi administration called for the creation of 'Hungarian' national councils across the former territory of Slovakia, and encouraged former Hungarian state officials to resume their posts in Upper Hungary to serve his government in Budapest.⁵⁵ Administrative officials, judges, railwaymen and other employees of the former Hungarian state - whose loyalty was critical to establishing effective control of the territory - were consequently forced to choose between two competing regimes.⁵⁶ The new Hungarian Minister for Nationalities, Oszkár Jászi, also indicated the regime's willingness to grant a form of 'Hungarian Home Rule' to Slovaks and other minority nationalities - a plan that would create an essentially federal state within the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary until 1918.⁵⁷ The Károlyi administration sought to define nationality questions as an internal problem for the Hungarian successor state to deal with in Budapest: subject only to international guarantees for minority rights that could be determined by the forthcoming European peace conference.⁵⁸

In the absence of either decisive military force or a peace treaty to settle this dispute, a breakdown of political order in Slovakia occurred. Unorganised rioting continued as it had done during the final weeks of the war in many villages, in which

⁵⁴ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness*, p. 191.

⁵⁵ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 105.

⁵⁶ Neumi, *Slovakia - A Playground for Nationalism*, p. 84-85.

⁵⁷ 'Home Rule Within Hungary', *The Times*, London, 7 Dec. 1918: p. 7.

⁵⁸ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 107.

foodstuffs and alcohol were seized and private properties ransacked.⁵⁹ In some cases, acts of violence against ‘Magyarones’ were also reported - individuals from Slovak-speaking background who adopted the Magyar tongue and whose political and national loyalties was perceived to be pro-Hungarian as a consequence.⁶⁰ Individuals identified as ‘Magyars’ and ‘Magyarones’ in the villages and smaller towns of Slovakia also tended to be the local Hungarian state officials and office-bearers, representing an old regime that had been discredited by war and the economic privation suffered by its citizens during 1918.⁶¹ In just one such public disturbance, more than fifty Magyar-speaking, Hungarian state officials were driven out of Prešporok County.⁶² In the absence of both qualified and loyal state officials capable of immediately taking up these vacant posts, communication and the rule of law itself broke down in many parts of Slovakia during November 1918.⁶³ While some former state officials and large property owners fled to the territory controlled by the Budapest government, other victims of these disturbances organised reprisals and raids on the rioting settlements in turn.⁶⁴ This further contributed to the breakdown of social order across much of rural Slovakia in autumn 1918, as local civilian mobs fought each other, largely irrespective of the declarations proclaimed by the respective National Councils.

The Slovak National Council was the first of the two Czecho-Slovak political bodies to undertake the task of establishing its control over the bulk of Slovakia, and its political legitimacy became tied to the establishment of public order. The Slovak

⁵⁹ Neumi, *Slovakia - A Playground for Nationalism*, p. 37.

⁶⁰ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 66.

⁶¹ Neumi, *Slovakia - A Playground for Nationalism*, p. 40.

⁶² Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p.70.

⁶³ Neumi, *Slovakia - A Playground for Nationalism*, p. 40; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 70.

⁶⁴ Neumi, *Slovakia - A Playground for Nationalism*, p. 43.

National Council used public declarations and leaflet campaigns to call on Slovaks to avoid looting and violence towards ‘citizens of a different religion or language’.⁶⁵ One such statement issued by the National Council to the citizens of Prešporok County warned citizens not to take matters into their own hands, declaring ‘let no-one be the judge of their own grievances. Everything has its own time. Disorder [will] delay everything’.⁶⁶ As this message shows, the objective of the Slovak National Council was to ensure a stable transition of the claimed territory of ‘Slovakia’ into a Czechoslovak state. In exchange for the Slovak-speaking masses acquiescing with this political program, the National Council’s leadership held out the promise that their social, economic and political grievances would be resolved in the new Czecho-Slovak state.

The violence that continued throughout the autumn of 1918 demonstrated that the Slovak National Council was largely powerless to influence events in Slovakia. For while Slovak nationalist leaders possessed a base of operations in Martin, their National Council lacked the military resources to impose its vision of political order on ordinary citizens. The Slovak National Council attempted to assert its authority through the creation of the Slovak National Guard. Just as the Martin leadership had instructed Slovak localities to form their own National Councils, settlements with more than 500 residents were also called upon to form their own units of this militia.⁶⁷ National Guard members, primarily recruited from Slovak soldiers from the former Austro-Hungarian army, were to be paid by the Slovak National Council for

⁶⁵ O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 207, poč. 17, ‘Ohlas výboru Slovenskej Národnej Rady pre Prešporok a okolie’, 9 Nov. 1918, 229/9; O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 207, poč. č. 17, Ohlas člena Slovenskej Národnej Rady Karola Štúra k obyvateľom Trenčína, Trenčín, 4 Nov. 1918, 232/9.

⁶⁶ ‘Ohlas výboru Slovenskej Národnej Rady pre Prešporok a okolie’, 229/9.

⁶⁷ ‘Ohlas Slovenskej Národnej Rady’, f. 1; Fond SNR, č. šk. 1, inv. č. 4, Spisy November 1918, ‘Služobný poriadok Slovenskej národnej gardy zo 4.11.1918’, Martin, 4 Nov. 1918, f. 1.

their service.⁶⁸ The formation of National Guard units in villages with as few as 500 inhabitants underlined that their principal objective was to defend property and to deter further violence and looting at the local level.⁶⁹ This militia was not mobilised in force to occupy and defend strategic positions across Upper Hungary; the 150-strong force established for the town of Martin reflected the typical size of individual Guard units.⁷⁰ Larger groups of undisciplined soldiers therefore seriously undermined the authority of the Slovak National Council. A band of two thousand demobilised Slovak soldiers from the Italian Front, for example, marched unopposed through the streets of Pressburg in early November 1918, looted civilian supplies and extorted money from the city's Jewish inhabitants.⁷¹ Even where Slovak National Guard units were formed, they lacked both the weapons and supplies that were needed to establish political order. A local Slovak National Council established for the village of Pružiná wrote to the Martin leadership in November 1918 to request rifles and supplies for their unit of one hundred guardsmen; the Martin leadership was able to provide just six weapons to the Pružiná council, and directed it to await supplies instead Czechoslovak military units, that were expected to arrive from neighbouring Moravia.⁷² The Slovak National Council lacked the necessary resources to control Slovakia by force and, owing to the competing Czechoslovak and Hungarian claims to the territory, also lacked the uncontested political authority that it needed to assert its rule over Slovakia.

⁶⁸ 'Ohlas Slovenskej Národnej Rady', f. 1; 'Služobný poriadok Slovenskej národnej gardy', f. 1; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 80.

⁶⁹ 'Ohlas Slovenskej Národnej Rady', f. 1.

⁷⁰ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 81.

⁷¹ Fond SNR č. šk. 1, inv. č. 4, 'Spisy november 1918', Samuel Zoch to Matúš Dula, Modra, 3 Nov. 1918, f. 1.

⁷² Fond SNR, č. šk. 1, inv. č. 4, 'Spisy november 1918', Matúš Dula to Štefan Herman, Martin, 7 Nov. 1918, f. 1.

This military weakness of the Slovak National Council meant that it was also unable to defend the claims of the Czechoslovak state in Slovakia against Hungarian military occupation. Citing the widespread disturbances taking place across Upper Hungary as its premise for intervention, the Hungarian army occupied much of the territory of Slovakia in November 1918, including the base of the Slovak National Council in Martin, whose leaders were briefly imprisoned.⁷³ The Hungarian military occupation demonstrated that the Slovak National Council could not uphold its political authority in the face of a mobilised, state army. The question of political control over Slovakia therefore became chiefly a contest between the two powers that could establish their control with military force: the Czecho-Slovak regime in Prague and its Hungarian counterpart in Budapest. The provisional Czechoslovak authorities in Prague, in coordination with the instructions of Edvard Beneš, its acting Foreign Minister in Paris, sought to establish a *fait accompli* by occupying Slovakia prior to the Paris Peace Conference convening in January 1919.⁷⁴ This military campaign was made possible by the arrival of some twenty thousand Czech and Slovak legionaries, who had fought on the side of Italy against Austria-Hungary in the war: these troops arrived in Bohemia on 3 December 1918 and were swiftly despatched to the east. The legionaries invaded Slovakia and, after some initial setbacks, secured the strategically vital Vah river valley.⁷⁵ On 29 December these Czechoslovak units captured the town of Košice and dissolved the 'East Slovak Republic' in the process: its leadership were allowed safe passage to the demarcation line between the Czechoslovak and Hungarian states.⁷⁶ A second column of

⁷³ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 107.

⁷⁴ Neumi, *Slovakia - A Playground for Nationalism*, p. 77.

⁷⁵ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 142.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

legionaries reached the southern Danube frontier and occupied the city of Pressburg on 2 January 1919.⁷⁷ The Šrobár-led Ministry for Slovakia tracked the advance of these military units loyal to Prague, establishing its seat of administration firstly in Žilina, then in Pressburg from February 1919.⁷⁸ The latter city was soon officially renamed 'Bratislava' and made the permanent seat of administration in Slovakia.⁷⁹ While the Slovak National Council was also theoretically free to restart its activity, the body did not survive the transition of power. Key officials within the Slovak National Council transferred their activity to the Ministry for Slovakia, once it became firmly established in Žilina, and their roles could not be filled. The general secretary of the National Council, Karol Medvecký, was for example appointed a minister within the Šrobár administration and subsequently worked under the new government from 13 December 1918.⁸⁰ The Slovak National Council was dissolved in January 1919 by a decree of the Ministry for Slovakia, alongside all other national council organisations in Slovakia.⁸¹ Minister Plenipotentiary Šrobár smoothed over any resentment felt by the Slovak nationalist leadership in Martin at being pushed aside in the daily administration of Slovakia through this act, by announcing that the *Matica Slovenská*, the Slovak cultural organisation dissolved by the Hungarian government in 1875, would be reformed with the support of the Prague regime in the same month.⁸²

The authority of the Prague-based, 'Czechoslovak National Committee' was successfully extended across Slovakia during the winter of 1918-19, after the

⁷⁷ Heimann, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 44.

⁷⁸ Bartl, *Slovak History*, p. 125.

⁷⁹ Heimann, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 55.

⁸⁰ O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 607, poč. Č. 299+23f, 'Zápisnice a poznámky z porad ministra a referentov: Zápisnica I porady splnomocneného ministerstva s plnou mocou pre správu Slovenska v Žiline, dňa 12-13/12/1918, Žilina, 12-13 Dec. 1918, f. 3.

⁸¹ Baer, *Vavro Šrobár's Czechoslovakism*, p. 77-78.,

⁸² Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 93.

conclusion of a political struggle which shaped the position of Slovak nationalism within the common state. In its Declaration of the Slovak Nation of October 1918 and subsequent declarations, the Slovak National Council had sought to direct the process by which the former territory of Upper Hungary was integrated with Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia into a common state. The historian Marián Hronský characterises the objective of the Slovak National Council as seeking to establish ‘a sort of Slovak 28th October’ during the chaotic autumn months of 1918.⁸³ In this argument, the goal of the Slovak nationalist leadership was to secure their unchallenged control over Slovakia without considerable civil unrest or political contestation: in the same way that Czech nationalists had gained control of Prague and then the bulk of Bohemia and Moravia in a coup. The Slovak National Council asserted however a weaker degree of authority, that was geographically limited to the strongholds of the Slovak National Party leadership in central Slovakia surrounding the town of Martin. Given widespread economic distress, starvation among the civilian population and the return of large demoralised bands of armed men from the Italian front to Slovakia in the autumn of 1918, it is not surprising that violent social disorder generally prevailed over appeals from Slovak nationalist leaders to keep the peace.⁸⁴ The Slovak National Councils claim to sovereignty was also undermined by many rival national councils, whose leaders demanded that their local districts and regions maintain their long-standing economic, political and cultural ties with the Hungarian state rather than forming part of Czecho-Slovakia. Critically, the Slovak National Council failed to effectively mobilise men, to group them into a body

⁸³ Hronský, ‘The Budapest Talks of Milan Hodža and the First Demarcation Line between Slovakia and Hungary’, in M. Pekník, (ed.), *Milan Hodža: Statesman and Politician*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2007, p. 178.

⁸⁴ H. Williams, ‘Mid Europe’s Woes Echoed at Berne’, *New York Times*, 7 Dec. 1918, p. 4; Johnson, *Slovakia 1918-1938*, p. 72.

greater than local guard units, or to secure key supplies such as guns and ammunition for them. Their National Council therefore could not assert its political claim to Slovakia, using force to dissolve rival national councils, or to maintain order among a restless civilian population. The Hungarian military occupation of Slovakia in mid-November 1918 demonstrated the vulnerability of the Slovak National Council to external intervention, and provided Czechoslovak military units and politicians loyal to the Prague government a pressing reason to establish firm control over Slovakia prior to the Paris Peace Conference.

The importance of the Slovak National Council's demise to the course of Slovak nationalism becomes clear once the markedly different approach of the Prague authorities to Slovak affairs is appraised. The Czechoslovak National Committee - in accordance with the views expressed by Masaryk and Beneš abroad - had determined within days of coming to power to establish their own administration for Slovakia and co-opted Slovak politicians into forming a joint Czecho-Slovak National Assembly in Prague.⁸⁵ These efforts essentially ignored the claim of the Slovak National Council to hold administrative power during the creation of the new state, and denied the legitimacy of that Council's all-party model as representative of the Slovak national movement within the common state. The Ministry for Slovakia was principally staffed by the political allies of Vavro Šrobár, which included his counterparts on the progressive, 'Hlasist' wing of Slovak nationalist politics as well as social democrat leaders such as Emanuel Lehocký and Ivan Dérer, who were ministers of Social Affairs and Justice respectively.⁸⁶ The traditional leadership of

⁸⁵ Baer, *Vavro Šrobár's Czechoslovakism*, p. 69-70.

⁸⁶ O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 10 inv. č. 612, poč. č. 2, 'Koncepty poverania pre referentov ministerstva, Vymenovania dňa 11.12.1918', f 1-2, [Žilina], 11 Dec. 1918, 25/22/4; Baer, *Vavro Šrobár's Czechoslovakism*, p. 78; Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*, p. 80.

the Slovak National Party in Martin, as well as the clerical faction of Slovak nationalists were marginalised in the daily administration of Slovakia, compared to the great influence enjoyed by progressives and the socialist left in Šrobár's regime.

Significantly, the Ministry for Slovakia controlled the award of delegate spots to the Czecho-Slovak National Assembly in Prague, that would determine the new state's constitution between 1918 until 1920. Delegate spots in the 'Club of Slovak Politicians', which set out the constitutional status of Slovakia alongside their Czech political counterparts, was not divided equitably, but was rather instead negotiated between leaders of the Slovak political factions with Šrobár's Ministry. The 'Hlasist' faction in which Šrobár had been a major pre-war figure did rather well from this arrangement, with eight delegates alongside Šrobár himself being selected to attend meetings of the Slovak Club and the National Assembly.⁸⁷ Slovak social democratic leaders also received nine mandates in the Slovak Club, although this represented less than the half of available mandates that they had initially lobbied for from the Ministry.⁸⁸ The ideological opponents of the Šrobár regime fared worse from this arbitrary process. The clerical or Catholic faction, whose leaders founded the 'Slovak People's Party' in December 1918, in part to counter the perceived anticlericalism of the Šrobár regime, received seven mandates in the Slovak Club.⁸⁹ The People's Party held only one of the eleven major posts within the Ministry for Slovakia and so lost out in this contest for political representation, that was determined by the broader

⁸⁷ Fond KSP, č. šk. 4, inv. č. 218, 'Stanovy Klubu Slovenských Poslancov: Členovia slovenského klubu', [1919], f. 12-14.

⁸⁸ Idem; O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 9 inv. č. 607, poč. č. 299+23f. 'XXV Zázpisnica porady splnomocneného ministerstva pre správu Slovenska v Žiline', dňa 25/1/1919', Žilina, 25 Jan. 1919, f. 86.

⁸⁹ 'Členovia slovenského klubu', f. 12-14; N. Nedelsky, *Defining the Sovereign Community: The Czech and Slovak Republics*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009, p. 71; Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*, p. 95.

cabinet and ultimately by Šrobár as its chief minister.⁹⁰ Nine Czech members were also awarded mandates to sit in the Slovak Club and to represent Slovakia in the National Assembly. Most of these Czech delegates had been leaders of pre-war groups such as 'Czechoslav Union' that had established commercial and limited political ties to Slovakia - in this capacity the banker Rudolf Pilát and politician Jozef Rotnágľ were for example given mandates in the Slovak Club.⁹¹ Edvard Beneš was also however awarded a place in the Slovak Club, as the acting Czechoslovak Foreign Minister did not have an affiliation or senior ranking among the Czech political parties or its national delegation.⁹² As critics of the Šrobár Ministry alleged at the time and as some modern historians have also argued, the effect of this arbitrary selection of political representatives for Slovakia served to "strengthen the position of the adherents of Czechoslovak national unity in Slovakia".⁹³ This meant that the Slovak Club delegation in the Czecho-Slovak National Assembly was more favourable toward the creation of a centralised state governed chiefly from Prague, rather than granting political autonomy to Slovakia in determining the new state's constitution.

The Czechoslovak authorities governing from Prague did not create nor likely wished for a political crisis to develop in Slovakia in the autumn of 1918: the crisis that occurred there however eased the Prague government's path to gaining complete control of the integration of Slovakia into the new state. The occupation of Slovakia by Hungarian troops in November and the effective dissolution of the Slovak National Council's claim to govern the territory achieved precisely the opposite of

⁹⁰ 'Koncepty poverania pre referentov ministerstva', 25/22/4.

⁹¹ Fond KSP, č. šk. 4, inv. č. 218, 'Stanovy Klubu Slovenských Poslancov, 'Predsednictvo Slovenského klubu, zvolené dňa 9.7.1919', Prague, 9 July 1919, f. 12.

⁹² Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 88.

⁹³ *Idem*.

what Károlyi's government had set out to achieve. Rather than excluding Czech political influence from the former boundaries of Hungary, the military occupation only strengthened the resolve of the Prague regime to secure its territorial claims in Slovakia by direct military force. As Hronský notes, the occupation of Slovakia in the winter of 1918-19 by Czech and Slovak legionaries represented a victory for the Prague authorities, but a setback for those 'in favour of the application of the dualist principle' – by which he meant an autonomous Slovak administration within a federal state.⁹⁴ Czech and Slovak politicians who argued for a centralised state, governed from Prague and by the Šrobár Ministry in Bratislava, found justifications for their stance in the abortive Slovak nationalist revolution in the autumn of 1918. Much of the discord within Slovak national movement, that led to its schism over Slovak autonomy just a few years later can be traced to this immediate fracturing of the Slovak national coalition: between governing Hlasists and social democrats within the Šrobár Ministry in Bratislava; and the conservative and clerical Catholic factions that were somewhat marginalised under the new regime. A Czechoslovak form of political order was successfully established in Slovakia, but it was established at the expense of political balance between the various factions of the Slovak national movement. It was into this political environment that Slovak Americans introduced the idea of a common state that they had established in wartime, and that would become the basis for a concerted campaign for Slovak political autonomy within the newly established, Czechoslovak state.

⁹⁴ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 95.

The Slovak Autonomy Movement, October 1918-February 1920

At the end of the First World War, the Slovak League of America and other Slovak American organisations sought to secure the political gains that had been achieved by their wartime campaign for Czecho-Slovak statehood. News of the creation of the Czecho-Slovak state and its struggle to control the territory of Slovakia from October 1918 reached a Slovak American audience at a slow pace. The postal service between the United States and Slovakia did not function until well into 1919, while other forms of communication such as the telegraph were unreliable.⁹⁵ By the spring of 1919 however, Slovak migrants in the United States knew that the borders of a new ‘Slovakia’ had been provisionally secured by Czecho-Slovak forces: from this point, the movement of migrants, capital and ideas to Europe could resume after nearly five years of disruption.⁹⁶ Slovak American engagement with the Czecho-Slovak state in its founding years took multiple forms. Some Slovak American leaders either visited or permanently settled in the new state: taking up various roles in Slovak political life to support the new Czech-Slovak state and to assist the new Czecho-Slovak administration for Slovakia. The activity of these individual Slovaks returning to the ‘old country’ was accompanied by formal delegations from the Slovak League of America, who were tasked with supporting efforts to build the new Slovakia. Slovak League delegates, including Milan Getting and the socialist newspaper editor Ján Matlocha, who served as chief advisors to the Ministry for

⁹⁵ *Jednota*, 9 Apr. 1919, p. 1; Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*, p. 37; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 89.

⁹⁶ *Jednota*, 15 Jan. 1919, p. 1; *Ibid.*, 12 Feb. 1919, p. 1.

Slovakia from the spring of 1919.⁹⁷ The Slovak League also sent a delegation that lobbied for the conditions of Slovak autonomy that it had set out in wartime to form the cornerstone of the Czechoslovak state's constitution. The Slovak-American community also formed a key constituency, whose moral and significant financial assistance was sought by both sides of the Slovak autonomy debate during the early years of the First Czechoslovak Republic.

Slovak American leaders first had to respond to the Declaration of the Slovak Nation of 30 October 1918, which stated the support of the Slovak national leadership in Europe for the creation of an independent, Czecho-Slovak state. Ivan Bielek, the editor of the National Slovak Society's newspaper in Pittsburgh, initially celebrated the contents of the Martin Declaration as a victory for the Slovak American campaign to liberate their countrymen. His editorial of 5 December 1918 declared that the Slovak American leadership had been 'vindicated' by the assent of the Slovak leadership in the old country to the Slovak American project to create a Czecho-Slovak state during the war.⁹⁸ Bielek further declared that 'today we are Czechoslovaks, today we are one nation' and called upon Slovaks to 'hold to the declaration, to retain complete unity and in the end our victory will be secured' in Europe.⁹⁹ The tone of Bielek's editorials, which celebrated the success of this 'Slovak colony in America [...] in the successful liberation of the Czechoslovak nation' into January 1919 would prove a source of political embarrassment for the editor in the years to come.¹⁰⁰ In the same way, Slovak politicians who took up the cause of autonomy, such as Andrej Hlinka, came to regret their signature to the

⁹⁷ O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 10, inv. č. 623, poč. č. 21+1f., Fedor Houdek to Vavro Šrobár, Paris, 11 Mar. 1919, 40/23/4.

⁹⁸ *Národné Noviny*, 5 Dec. 1918, p. 4.

⁹⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁰⁰ *Národné Noviny*, 30 Jan. 1919, p. 4.

Declaration of the Slovak Nation: a document whose wording stated that Slovaks formed ‘a branch of the single, Czecho-Slovak nation’.¹⁰¹ Both the National Slovak Society and Bielek soon distanced themselves from this idea that ‘Czecho-Slovaks’ constituted ‘one nation’ in the new state, as they agitated for Slovaks to receive full national autonomy. By the end of 1919, Bielek declared that the Slovak American community wished for ‘autonomy for Slovakia, in the framework of the Czecho-Slovak Republic’: a demand that was based on ‘historical, cultural and economic differences: from the different characters of Czechs and Slovaks’ in their common state.¹⁰² As the previous chapter has shown, Slovak American leaders had already debated Slovak autonomy extensively during the First World War, and largely transferred their own views to the post-war debate. Jozef Hušek, the *Jednota* editor who had demanded a pledge of Slovak autonomy within the Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918, declared his support for the efforts of Ferdiš Juriga within the Slovak National Council to preserve Slovak ‘national individuality’ and Juriga’s call for a federal Czecho-Slovak state.¹⁰³ *Jednota* called for Juriga’s stance to be upheld by other Slovak politicians, so that ‘Slovakia would become a part of the Czechoslovak Republic as an individual nation of its own will, and that in this union it would receive all rights which belong to a nation.’¹⁰⁴

The Slovak American programme for Slovak political autonomy, expressed in the Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918, provided the key constitutional blueprint for supporters of Slovak autonomy in Europe. The development of a concerted political campaign to deliver autonomy to Slovakia was triggered by the arrival of the

¹⁰¹ O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 207, počet č. 17, ‘Deklarácia Slovenského Národa’, Martin, 30 Oct. 1918, 226/9.

¹⁰² *Národné Noviny*, 23 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

¹⁰³ *Jednota*, 27 Nov. 1918, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Idem*.

Pittsburgh Agreement in the new Czecho-Slovak state. On 27 November 1918, the Central Committee of the Slovak League of America agreed to send a contingent of prominent Slovak leaders from the United States to Europe, who were tasked with meeting the Czecho-Slovak delegation at the forthcoming Paris Peace Conference and politicians in the emerging Czecho-Slovak state.¹⁰⁵ The President of the Slovak League Albert Mamatey claimed in February 1919 to Vojta Beneš, secretary of the Bohemian National Alliance in the United States, that the Slovak American delegation to Europe ‘were not chosen or voted for with the aim of representing the Slovak League or as delegates’ but were rather ‘agitators among the Slovak people, who should be at the disposition of the Czechoslovak government’.¹⁰⁶ The Slovak League of America’s delegation was also given the formal title ‘The Reconstruction Mission for Czecho-Slovakia’, in an attempt to conceal the political goals of the participants from the United States’ State Department: which was screening passport applications to Europe from groups such as journalists in order to prevent the spread of Bolshevik ideology to the United States.¹⁰⁷

While agitation among the ordinary Slovak-speaking population formed the official remit given to the Slovak League’s ‘Reconstruction Mission’ to Slovakia, the members of this delegation were also expected to act as the League’s political representatives in Europe. It is perhaps not surprising that Mamatey concealed this aspect of its mission in his correspondence with the Czech American leader Vojta Beneš: given that the latter’s brother Edvard was the leader of the Czecho-Slovak

¹⁰⁵ Š. Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie po vzniku Česko-Slovenska (1918-1920)’, in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraníčí*, Vol. 27, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2010, p. 80.

¹⁰⁶ Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, poč. č. 487, ‘Korešpondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920’, Albert Mamatey to Vojta Beneš, Pittsburgh, PA, 24 Feb. 1919, f. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Albert Mamatey to Milan Getting, Pittsburgh, PA, 8 Jan. 1919, f. 1.

delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. Yet Mamatey's internal correspondence with the Slovak League's treasurer, Michal Bosák, in approving the payment of steamship tickets for members of the 'Reconstruction Mission' to Europe from the Slovak League's funds, described these expenses as being accrued by the League's 'emissaries' in Europe.¹⁰⁸ In another letter sent by Mamatey to Vavro Šrobár in November 1919, Mamatey complained about hostile agitation conducted against him by Milan Getting, on the grounds that Mamatey had granted Getting's request to travel to Slovakia as an 'emissary' of the Slovak League in its 'Reconstruction Mission'.¹⁰⁹ The members of this party were therefore not sent solely to assist the Czecho-Slovak government: they were subsidised by the Slovak League and their conduct was subject to scrutiny as delegates of that organisation in Europe.

The political significance attached to the Slovak League's 'Reconstruction Mission' can also be seen by examining the background of the members selected for the role. On the one hand, the mission included Slovak American leaders who had been vocal supporters of a Czecho-Slovak political union from the early months of the First World War and who did not consider Slovak autonomy to be a feasible or worthwhile goal within the new state. The 'Reconstruction Mission' included Milan Getting - the Czechophile, Slovak Sokol officer and journalist based in New York - as well as Ján Matlocha: the socialist newspaper editor in Chicago, whose wartime agitation had led to the fall of the sceptic of Czecho-Slovak political union, Ivan Daxner, from his role as general secretary of the Slovak League of America in 1917. These supporters of a centralised, Czechoslovak state governed from Prague became

¹⁰⁸ Fond SLA, č. šk. 1, 'Korešpondencia Slovenskej Ligy v Amerike', poč. č. 82, Albert Mamatey to Michal Bosák, Braddock, PA, 31 Mar. 1919, f. 1.

¹⁰⁹ O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 13, inv. č. 678, poč. č. 27, Albert Mamatey to Vavro Šrobár, Pittsburgh, PA, 22 Nov. 1919, 18/156/18.

important officials within the Šrobár Ministry in Bratislava. From April 1919, Getting and Matlocha headed the Šrobár regime's 'Slovak Print Office' (*Tlačová Kancelária Slovenskej*), which published public information as well as hundreds of thousands of copies of government propaganda across Slovakia.¹¹⁰ Working with over one hundred Slovak Sokol volunteers from the United States - who had served as 'Czecho-Slovak Legionaries' on the Western Front and occupied Slovakia in the military campaign of December 1918 – Getting and Matlocha also set up a 'Preventive Branch' of the Slovak Print Office: which acted as the Ministry's counter-espionage agency in Slovakia.¹¹¹ The Preventive Agency sought to counter the activity of Hungarian and Polish agents operating within Slovakia as well as informing the Šrobár regime of the population's political sentiments: by 1920 the agency had established nearly ten thousand government informants across Slovakia.¹¹² Still acting in theory as 'emissaries' of the Slovak League of America, Getting and Matlocha then directed their propaganda and espionage networks against the Slovak People's Party campaign for political autonomy before the Czechoslovak elections of April 1920.¹¹³ Edo Kováč, a Slovak businessmen in the United States, was also identified as being sympathetic to the idea of a more centralised

¹¹⁰ O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 10, inv. č. 623, poč. č. 21+1f., Fedor Houdek to Vavro Šrobár, Paris, 11 Mar. 1919, 40/23/4; HSWPA, Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Milan P. Getting, 'Milan Getting, 1878-1951: Czechoslovak Consul, Journalist, Editor, Sokol Organizer, Activist', Bossier City, LA, June 1988., f. 5; Getting Family Papers, Box 4, Folder 4, Getting, Milan Sr., 'American Slovaks and the Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept During the Years 1914-1918, Part II - Hungarian Attempts to Regain Slovakia in the years 1919 and 1920', [1933], f. 265; Neumi, *Slovakia – A Playground For Nationalism*, p. 137, p. 139.

¹¹¹ Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, 'Milan Getting Sr., Professional Materials - Bratislava, 1919-1920'. 'Zpráva Preventivného Odboru Propagačnej Kancelárie', č. 836/2, Bratislava, 22 Jan. 1920, f. 1; č. 866/2, Bratislava, 29 Jan. 1920, ff. 1-4.

¹¹² Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, 'Milan Getting Sr., Professional Materials - Bratislava, 1919-1920', Vavro Šrobár to Dr. Ludovít Okánik, 9/919, Bratislava, 17 Dec. 1919, f. 1; Getting Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, 'Milan Getting Sr., Professional Materials - Bratislava, 1919-1920', Milan Getting to Pavel Varšík, 'Zpráva novinárskeho odboru Slovenskej tlačovej kancelárie o jeho celej doterajšej činnosti', Bratislava, 28 Feb. 1920, f. 4.

¹¹³ Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919. 40/23/4; M. P. Getting, 'Milan Getting, 1878-1951', f. 5.

Czechoslovak state: though his activity largely concerned the establishment of commercial links between Czech and Slovak businesses in the United States with firms in the new Czecho-Slovak state.¹¹⁴

The cause of Slovak autonomy in a Czecho-Slovak state was represented in the Slovak League's delegation to Europe by Miroslav Francisci, a doctor by profession and a Lutheran by faith, as well as Jozef Hušek, the Catholic editor of *Jednota*.¹¹⁵ Hušek provided a detailed account of his experiences in the 'Reconstruction Mission' to Europe within his organisation's almanac for 1920, in which he remarked 'there were not only different interests, but also different political and religious principles' within the delegation.¹¹⁶ Hušek stressed that 'in the autonomy question, we were divided like so: two members were with their body and soul for autonomy; three spoke from their heart against it.'¹¹⁷ The diverging views held by the members of the 'Reconstruction Mission' on Slovak autonomy reflected the influence of different factions acting within the Slovak League of America. Matlocha and Getting represented a current of both radical and broadly Czechophile politics, which were identified with the Slovak colonies in Chicago and New York respectively. In contrast to their sympathy for the idea of a centralised Czecho-Slovak state, the Slovak League selected both a Lutheran (Francisci) and Catholic (Hušek) supporter of Slovak autonomy. The membership of its 'Reconstruction Mission' thus represented the chief factions operating within the Slovak League from both a political and religious standpoint, at the end of the war. Hušek also criticised

¹¹⁴ Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919. 40/23/4-41/23/4.

¹¹⁵ J. Hušek, 'Čo som videl, počul' a skúsil na Slovensku', *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, Middletown, PA: Prvá Slovenská Katolícka Jednota, 1920, pp. 33-60; Š. Kucík, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie', p. 81.

¹¹⁶ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 33.

¹¹⁷ Idem.

the selection of Getting, who in the Catholic editor's view 'took part for his own personal goals and through this was sent [by the League], as if to work in the interests of the Pittsburgh Agreement and autonomy'.¹¹⁸ Indeed, Hušek's specific criticism of Getting's conduct and criticism of other members of the mission for their hostility to the cause of autonomy shows how such a prominent member viewed the real purpose of the 'Reconstruction Mission'. Its purpose for Hušek was to agitate for the Pittsburgh Agreement to be taken up as a constitutional claim by Slovak nationalist politicians in the old country and for it to be implemented by the Czechoslovak government in the new state's constitution. The selection of members for the 'Reconstruction Mission' that ultimately carried the Pittsburgh Agreement to Europe took on clear political significance within the Slovak League. The cause of Slovak autonomy in the new state was also identified as a defining political objective by members of the mission itself: that had to be either lobbied for or actively opposed upon their arrival in Europe in the spring of 1919.

The 'Reconstruction Mission' certainly acted as a semi-official delegation of the Slovak League in all but name once it arrived in Europe. The intended scope of its activity, as granted by Mamatey remains, however, unclear. The dispatch of formal instructions by the Slovak League to members of the mission, setting out their personal responsibilities to the League or the distinct political objectives to be pursued by the mission is doubtful. One letter sent by Ján Matlocha in February 1919 suggested to the Slovak League that members of the Reconstruction Mission should meet to 'obtain instructions' from League officials before travelling to Europe.¹¹⁹ The historian Štefan Kucík claims that Mamatey instructed two members of the mission,

¹¹⁸ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 52-53.

¹¹⁹ Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, 'Korešpondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920', poč. č. 487, Ján Matlocha to Albert Mamatey, Harvey, IL, 10 Feb. 1919, f. 1.

Miroslav Francisci and Jozef Hušek, to negotiate on behalf of the Slovak League with Slovak nationalist politicians in Czecho-Slovakia, since both were in favour of the terms of the Pittsburgh Agreement and establishing an autonomous Slovak administration within the Czecho-Slovak state.¹²⁰ Kucík claims that the other three members of the delegation ‘did not receive Mamatey’s authorisation to negotiate with Slovak leaders in the Czecho-Slovak Republic’ on account of their perceived hostility to the cause of Slovak autonomy.¹²¹ There are however good grounds to be sceptical of this argument. Firstly, Kucík does not explain how such a distinction within the Slovak League mission could have been enforced once its members arrived in Europe: the Slovak League possessed few means through which to sanction its delegates for exceeding a political brief provided to them by Mamatey in Pittsburgh. It is also difficult to conceive of two Slovak American delegates who would have been less likely to accept a subordinate role than the radical journalists Ján Matlocha and Milan Getting respectively - a fact of which Mamatey was well aware. In July 1916, Mamatey complained to an anonymous Slovak newspaper editor in the United States about Matlocha for undermining the Slovak League by contributing hostile articles to a Czech socialist newspaper in Chicago.¹²² By June 1917 Mamatey declared himself ‘tired’ of dealing with ‘these Gettingites and Chicagoans’ within the wartime Czecho-Slovak independence movement.¹²³ Given the known opposition of both members of the mission to Slovak autonomy, it is inconceivable that Mamatey expected Matlocha and Getting either to adopt the

¹²⁰ Š. Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie’, p. 81-82.

¹²¹ Idem.

¹²² O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 20, inv. č. 931, poč. č. 8, Albert Mamatey to Anon., Pittsburgh, PA, 22 July 1916, 71/156/18.

¹²³ Fond SLA, č. šk. 1, ‘Korešpondencia Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike’, poč. č. 82, Albert Mamatey to C. L. Orbach, Pittsburgh, PA, 15 June 1917, f. 1.

Slovak League's collective position in Europe, or to accept the leadership of a personal and political rival like Jozef Hušek within the League's delegation. Hušek's own account of the Slovak delegation's mission does not mention the award of a specific, personal mandate to himself or any clear political instructions given by Mamatey to the 'Reconstruction Mission'. Rather, Hušek specifically described how 'each [member] carried in a bag a trustworthy copy of the American document with President Masaryk [the Pittsburgh Agreement]' during the Slovak American mission to Europe in 1919.¹²⁴ This evidence from a key member of the Slovak delegation points to the Reconstruction Mission lacking an explicit set of instructions from the Slovak League. In its place, however, each member was granted a copy of the political programme that the Slovak League wished to disseminate among Slovak politicians in Europe and within the Czecho-Slovak government: the Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918.

The 'Reconstruction Mission' was not the only formal representation of Slovaks in the United States travelling to Europe. On 27 November - the same day as the Slovak League's leadership approved its mission - a separate convention of Slovak Catholic priests and journalists was held in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.¹²⁵ The meeting raised concerns among the Slovak Catholic priesthood that the Czecho-Slovak regime would prove hostile to the interests of the Catholic Church in the old country. These concerns were stoked by the Slovak American priest and publicist Alexander Dianiška, who used reports of the nationalist revolution in Prague to warn the assembled audience that the chief ministers of the new Czecho-Slovak regime

¹²⁴ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 33.

¹²⁵ Š. Kucík, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie', p. 80.

were ‘unreliable from a religious standpoint’.¹²⁶ The Catholic convention nominated Pavel Šiška, a priest and officer of the Catholic Union fraternal organisation, to represent their concerns in Europe and to lobby for the interests of the Catholic Church at Šrobár’s Ministry for Slovakia.¹²⁷ Two further delegates, including a Lutheran, were also nominated to travel to Europe for the same purpose, but funding for these additional two delegates was turned down by the Slovak League of America.¹²⁸ The attempt to secure Lutheran representation within this delegation suggests that its chief purpose was to represent the interests of the different religious confessions on matters such as religious schooling in the Czecho-Slovak state. This mission did not prevent Pavel Šiška from also expressing his support for Slovak autonomy though, and the delegate representing Slovak Catholics in the United States acted as a lobbyist alongside the members of the Slovak League’s ‘Reconstruction Mission’ in Europe from the spring of 1919.¹²⁹

The ‘Reconstruction Mission’ sent by the Slovak League of America to Europe in 1919 held only a vague remit from the Slovak League’s leadership. The delegates of the mission also held clearly opposed political views regarding the future status of Slovakia in a Czecho-Slovak state. It is hardly surprising that attempts by members of this delegation to agitate for the Pittsburgh Agreement were undermined and proved unsuccessful. The members of the ‘Reconstruction Mission’ did not even travel to Europe together: Milan Getting claiming impatience at delays affecting other members of the group, left the United States separately and arrived in Paris two

¹²⁶ *Idem.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹²⁸ *Idem.*

¹²⁹ Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919, 40/23/4.

weeks ahead of the other members on 3 March 1919.¹³⁰ Getting travelled instead with the representative of Slovak Catholics in the United States, Pavel Šiška. The first two Slovak American delegates to contact Czecho-Slovak politicians in Europe after the war therefore consisted of one supporter and one opponent of the Pittsburgh Agreement: a division that set the tone for the consequent Slovak American mission.

On 8 March, the two newly arrived emissaries of the Slovak League of America met the Czecho-Slovak delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, which included in its team six Slovak representatives.¹³¹ An account of this meeting, as well as the purpose of the Slovak American delegation, was relayed to the Slovak Ministry in Bratislava by Fedor Houdek, the leading Slovak member of the Peace Conference delegation and a political ally of Vavro Šrobár. He informed the Šrobár government on 11 March that two of the Slovak League delegates travelling to Europe were ‘separatists’: a description that falsely equated their support for Slovak autonomy within a Czecho-Slovak state with a desire for secession.¹³² It is likely that Houdek’s assessment of the Slovak American delegation was heavily influenced by Milan Getting, who used his early arrival in Paris to undermine the credibility of the pro-autonomy members of the ‘Reconstruction Mission’. Houdek’s memorandum, for example, recommended that Šrobár should correspond with Albert Mamatey, President of the Slovak League of America, about the possibility of assisting the Ministry for Slovakia, but at the same time warned the Minister Plenipotentiary that ‘the majority’ of Slovaks living in the United States were also ‘separatists’ like the

¹³⁰ Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919, 40/23/4; Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie’, p. 81.

¹³¹ Fond SLA, č. šk. 3, poč. č. 487, ‘Korešpondencia Alberta Mamateya, 1912-1920’, Circular of Albert Mamatey to Slovak Newspaper Editors, Pittsburgh, PA, Mar. 1919, f. 1.

¹³² Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919, 40/23/4.

delegates being sent to Paris by the Slovak League.¹³³ Possessing very little knowledge about Slovak opinion in the United States, it is clear that Houdek's report stemmed largely from Getting's politically slanted description rather than a credible analysis. Houdek indeed reported that Getting had 'views similar to ourselves' on the matter of Slovak autonomy in his correspondence with Šrobár: for Getting as much as the Ministry for Slovakia was opposed to the programme contained within the Pittsburgh Agreement.¹³⁴

The hostility of Houdek towards the idea of Slovak autonomy in the new state set the tone for an unproductive chapter in the Slovak American delegation's mission. Jozef Hušek stated that the Slovak representatives in Paris 'would not have given even a single paper Czechoslovak crown for our [Pittsburgh] Agreement'.¹³⁵ Hušek's barb about Slovak politicians treating the Pittsburgh Agreement with less regard than the chronically devalued currency of the new state expressed their clear hostility to the idea of Slovak autonomy. This was the first impression presented upon the arrival of the Slovak American delegation in Europe. Hostility to Slovak autonomy was in part generated by members of the delegation itself, as supporters of a centralised state: Milan Getting worked to discredit the political reliability of Slovak American agitators for autonomy by portraying them as 'separatists' from the Czecho-Slovak state. While the Czecho-Slovak delegation feigned a lack of interest in the contents of the Pittsburgh Agreement, the significance of the document that the Slovak American delegation brought to Paris was not in fact lost upon Slovak politicians. Rather, a copy of the Pittsburgh Agreement was attached by Fedor Houdek in his initial memorandum to the Slovak Ministry on 11 March 1919,

¹³³ Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919, 40/23/4.

¹³⁴ *Idem*.

¹³⁵ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 34.

marking the arrival of this document in Slovak politics, where it was to gain an increasingly intense political significance over the following two decades.¹³⁶

The Slovak American delegation then travelled to Prague in April 1919, where they held a brief audience with President Masaryk.¹³⁷ Serious political questions were not, however, discussed at the meeting. Jozef Hušek later justified this by claiming that for the Slovak delegates to press Masaryk to once more commit to the Pittsburgh Agreement, the document that he had personally signed while in exile, would have been to ‘harm the interests of our cause and the [Czecho-Slovak] Republic’.¹³⁸ Hušek declared instead that the demand to implement the Pittsburgh Agreement ‘must come from the people of Slovakia’, a goal that the Catholic editor sought to bring about.¹³⁹ The party continued on to Bratislava, where they undertook a more conscious effort to lobby the Ministry for Slovakia on the matter of Slovak autonomy. The Ministry had been kept fully briefed about the movement of the Slovak American delegation and the strategy of its pro-autonomy members to press for the Pittsburgh Agreement. In another memorandum to the Ministry for Slovakia from Paris, Fedor Houdek observed that the Slovak American delegation ‘imagines that we will have our own [Slovak] political assembly’ in the new state, based on the pledge for an autonomous Slovak assembly provided within the Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918.¹⁴⁰ In opposition to this, Houdek argued that the ‘American document from 1918 is not recognised [by the Czecho-Slovak government]’ as being a valid basis for the new state’s constitution and consequently advised Šrobár not to

¹³⁶ Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919, 41/23/4.

¹³⁷ O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 10, inv. č. 623, poč. č. 21+1f, Fedor Houdek to Vavro Šrobár, Paris, 1 Apr. 1919, 48/23/4.

¹³⁸ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 34.

¹³⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁴⁰ Houdek to Šrobár, 1 Apr. 1919, 48/23/4.

sign a copy of the Pittsburgh Agreement, which the Slovak dignitaries from the United States intended to place before the Minister Plenipotentiary in Bratislava.¹⁴¹ The supporters of Slovak autonomy failed to gain the support of Šrobár or other government ministers for the Pittsburgh Agreement. Hušek dismissed the hostile attitude of the Slovak Ministry, describing the government in Bratislava as being ‘in the hands of the so-called Hlasists [...] who in the revolution saw their opportunity to fulfil their ideal: to Czechify Slovakia culturally, politically and economically.’¹⁴²

Within weeks of arriving in Europe, the delegation of Slovaks from the United States failed to win recognition for the Pittsburgh Agreement and their goal of an autonomous administration for ‘Slovakia’ by the Czecho-Slovak government. Rather than the delegation’s failure being the outcome of Czech nationalist chauvinism, however, the main cause of discord over the idea of Slovak autonomy emerged among Slovak national leaders. The testimony from the Slovak American delegation does not document frustration at the attitude of Czech politicians towards the idea of Slovak autonomy. On the contrary, the autonomist Jozef Hušek’s account declared that Karel Kramář, the Czech nationalist Prime Minister of the Czecho-Slovak state and who led its delegation to the Peace Conference, was ‘not - or at least not at that time - very enthusiastic for a centralised administration’ in the new state.¹⁴³ Regarding Edvard Beneš, the Czecho-Slovak Foreign Minister and outspoken representative for the new state at the Peace Conference, Hušek stated that Beneš ‘assured us that the Slovaks would receive everything that belonged to them by right and by justice, as much as would not harm the common interests of the

¹⁴¹ Houdek to Šrobár, 11 Mar. 1919, 41/23/4.

¹⁴² *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 38.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

republic'.¹⁴⁴ The *Jednota* editor's disdain instead centred on a substantial faction of Slovak nationalists from the old country, who themselves rejected the idea of Slovak autonomy within the new state. He made it clear to his Slovak readership in the United States that the members of the Czecho-Slovak delegation who spoke out forcefully against the Pittsburgh Agreement 'were not Czechs, but rather Slovaks', including politicians such as Fedor Houdek and Marián Blaha. Houdek set out his own hostile stance towards the Pittsburgh Agreement in his correspondence with Vavro Šrobár, in which he expressed his view that 'the American Slovaks [...] did not have the right to agree the political conditions for ourselves, in our country here'.¹⁴⁵ Even Jozef Škultetý, editor of the Slovak National Party's newspaper in Martin, while reported by Hušek to have been 'pleased' by the content of the Pittsburgh Agreement, also concluded that 'nothing will likely come of' the document's vision of an autonomous Slovak administration.¹⁴⁶

The vision of an autonomous Slovak territory with full language rights, its own administration and parliament, in accordance with the language set out in the Pittsburgh Agreement was rejected in the spring of 1919 by Slovak nationalists within the Czecho-Slovak delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. It was further rejected by the chief politicians and officials in the Ministry for Slovakia. While supporters of Slovak autonomy such as Hušek sought to dismiss the opposition of the Ministry in Bratislava as stemming from 'a government in the hands of the so-called Hlasists', it is important to note that their claim was based more in rhetoric than fact.¹⁴⁷ While many key positions were indeed filled by Šrobár and political allies

¹⁴⁴ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 34.

¹⁴⁵ Houdek to Šrobár, 1 Apr. 1919, 48/23/4.

¹⁴⁶ *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 34.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

from his 'Hlasist' faction, Slovak Social Democrats as well as many Slovak nationalists from the traditional group of Slovak nationalists in Martin also participated in the broader administration of Slovakia. The Šrobár Ministry disproportionately represented Slovak politicians who favoured a centralised state, but the regime was made up of Slovak leaders who had been part of the national movement before the war. The lack of support given to the Pittsburgh Agreement by the Ministry for Slovakia in April 1919 therefore represented the rejection of the idea of Slovak autonomy by a considerable portion of the Slovak national movement in Europe. The failure of the Slovak American mission to generate support within the governing circles of the Czecho-Slovak state in the spring of 1919 was a significant setback for their cause of Slovak autonomy. It was not caused by Czech nationalist chauvinism towards Slovak political demands within their joint state, but rather by the rejection of an autonomous Slovakia by many Slovak politicians in the old country.

The failure of the Slovak American delegation to win support for the Pittsburgh Agreement by the Czecho-Slovak government led to the campaign for Slovak autonomy developing much closer links with the Slovak People's Party. This clerical faction of the Slovak national movement in Europe had been marginalised from the governing regime of the Ministry for Slovakia and the central institutions of the Czecho-Slovak state. Its leaders like Ferdiš Juriga and Andrej Hlinka had already raised objections to their faction's smaller share of mandates in the Slovak Club of Politicians in Prague than the Hlasists and other elements of the Slovak national movement, as well as the perceived anticlerical tone and policies of the Šrobár regime that governed Slovakia in the spring of 1919. Yet these grievances had not yet

crystallised into a defining struggle about Slovak nationalism. The People's Party had not yet considered the question of Slovak autonomy to form part of their political program. Its first post-war manifesto, published on 19 December 1918, declared instead that the People's Party stood 'on the basis of the Declaration of the Slovak Nation', which did not include provisions for Slovak autonomy.¹⁴⁸ The manifesto of the People's Party called for 'full autonomy' to be granted to district and county administrations, rather than for Slovakia itself to have its own administration, parliament or judicial system.¹⁴⁹ The party's activity in the spring of 1919 focused on criticising the secularising agenda of the Šrobár Ministry in state and formerly Church-administered schools, as well as lobbying for greater representation of their own political party within the Czecho-Slovak National Assembly.¹⁵⁰ The People's Party therefore took on a fairly orthodox role as an organised, opposition party within the new, Czecho-Slovak political system, rather than seeking to overturn or significantly amend the founding political structure of the new state. The arrival of the Pittsburgh Agreement in the spring of 1919 proved to be the decisive turning point, after which a lasting schism over Slovak autonomy developed and defined the politics of Slovak nationalism for the duration of the First Czechoslovak Republic and beyond.

The cause of Slovak autonomy among Slovak nationalists in Europe was first taken up by the Slovak People's Party, which received the Pittsburgh Agreement from the Slovak American delegation to Europe in the spring of 1919. It is not entirely clear how the document got into the hands of the party leadership, for the

¹⁴⁸ A. Hlinka, 'Program kresťanskej slovenskej ľudovej strany', Žilina, [19 Dec. 1918], published in *Jednota*, 6 Aug. 1919, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Idem.

¹⁵⁰ J. M. Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator: Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013, p. 65-66.

available sources provide conflicting accounts of this politically controversial episode in the history of Slovak nationalism. It is most likely however that the contents of the Pittsburgh Agreement were disclosed to the People's Party in April 1919 by Jozef Hušek, the editor of the Catholic Union's *Jednota* newspaper; this is the conclusion reached by the historian Konštantín Čulen: whose study of the Pittsburgh Agreement, written before the Second World War, had access to additional sources and eyewitness testimonies that have since been lost.¹⁵¹ Hušek visited Andrej Hlinka in the People's Party leader's home parish of Ružomberok, following the Slovak American delegation's unsuccessful attempts to lobby support for the Pittsburgh Agreement in Bratislava.¹⁵² In a published account of his mission to Europe in the Slovak American press, Hušek played down this meeting with Hlinka as being a minor event that had only lasted a few hours.¹⁵³ Their interview was nevertheless sufficient for Hušek to describe the People's Party leader as 'a great character, with much to admire and love', but also one lacking in 'political savvy'.¹⁵⁴ Upon returning to the United States, the *Jednota* editor reported on the political conditions in Slovakia to the annual congress of the Slovak League of America on 29 May, where he declared that while the governing regime in Bratislava was hostile to the idea of Slovak autonomy, the Pittsburgh Agreement's content had received a warmer reception by Slovak nationalists in Ružomberok.¹⁵⁵ Given that the small town was one of the main centres of the People's Party and Hlinka's base of activities at this time, as opposed to the traditional centre of the Slovak National Party in Martin, Hušek was explicitly referring to the reaction of the People's Party

¹⁵¹ K. Čulen, *Pittsburghská Dohoda*, Bratislava: Kníhtlačiareň Andreja, 1937, p. 240.

¹⁵² Idem; *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1920*, p. 60.

¹⁵³ Idem.

¹⁵⁴ Idem.

¹⁵⁵ Š. Kucík, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie', p. 83.

in this account to the Slovak League. This disclosure of the contents of the Pittsburgh Agreement to Hlinka by Hušek was then supplemented by the passing of a physical copy of the document to the People's Party in August 1919. Both Karol Sidor and František Jehlička identify another member of the Slovak American delegation to Europe, the Catholic priest Pavel Šiška, as the owner of this physical copy, which had been taken from the United States as part of the Slovak American delegation, and was then provided to the People's Party either through an intermediary or directly to Jehlička, depending on the choice of these two conflicting accounts.¹⁵⁶ The basic process by which the Pittsburgh Agreement was transmitted to the People's Party leadership was the same in both cases. Slovak Catholic delegates from the United States, provided the content as well as a physical copy of the document to the leadership of the Catholic, clerical political party in the old country. In the summer of 1919, the Slovak People's Party adopted the Pittsburgh Agreement as its own constitutional program, and called for the provision of an autonomous Slovak administration and parliament within the Czecho-Slovak state.¹⁵⁷

Two key elements combined to make the Pittsburgh Agreement such a significant document for the reshaping of Slovak nationalist politics from the summer of 1919. Firstly, the contents of this fateful document must be considered. From a broader historical perspective, the provisions held within the Pittsburgh Agreement were not particularly radical. The idea of at least a limited form of Slovak autonomy had been raised within the 'Memorandum of the Slovak Nation' of 1861, which had called for an 'Upper Hungarian Slovak District' to be formed from the north-western

¹⁵⁶ K. Sidor, *Slováci v zahraničnom odboji*, Middletown, PA: Jednota, 1928, p. 220-221; F. Jehlička, *Father Hlinka's Struggle for Freedom*, London: The Slovak Council, 1938, p. 18.

¹⁵⁷ Š. Kucik, 'Príspevok Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike k Autonomistickému Hnutiu na Slovensku v Rokoch 1918-1938', in S. Bajaník and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 25, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2008, p. 80.

counties of the Kingdom of Hungary.¹⁵⁸ The idea of Slovakia having autonomy within the new Czecho-Slovak state had been discussed by leading representatives within the Slovak National Council on 31 October 1918. A guarantee of an autonomous Slovak district in Hungary also formed the basis of the overtures made by the Károlyi regime in Budapest to Slovak politicians in November 1918, seeking to entice Slovak nationalists to renounce their support for a Czecho-Slovak state.¹⁵⁹ The idea of Slovak autonomy contained in the Pittsburgh Agreement was therefore not new: what made the document powerful was the clarity in which this constitutional idea was expressed. The key section of the Pittsburgh Agreement set out in four, remarkably concise sentences the envisaged structure of the Czecho-Slovak state: that the territory of 'Slovakia' should have 'its own administration, its own parliament and its own courts' within an independent, democratic, Czecho-Slovak republic; the Slovak language would be the administrative language in Slovakia, as well as the intended language of instruction in public schools.¹⁶⁰ The 1861 Memorandum, by contrast, listed the historical grievances expressed by Slovak nationalists and set out their political demands within the Kingdom of Hungary over a full eleven pages.¹⁶¹ By the summer of 1919, the goal of an independent, democratic Czecho-Slovak republic had mostly come to pass: what remained to be resolved was the Slovak question within that new state. Slovak as well as Czech politicians could argue that autonomy for Slovakia was either undesirable in principle, or that Slovakia was not yet ready for self-government: what they could not do, once the Pittsburgh Agreement came to light, was to fail to recognise what

¹⁵⁸ 'Memorandum národa slovenského', in 'Dr. Vacovský', *Slováci a Mad'ari*, p. 116-117.

¹⁵⁹ 'Znáčky Zasadnutia Výkonného výboru SNR, 31.10.1918', *Martin*, 31 Oct. 1918, f. 1; Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 120-1.

¹⁶⁰ Fond KSP, č. šk. 5, 'Záležitosti - Kopia Pittsburghskej Dohody', f. 1.

¹⁶¹ 'Memorandum národa slovenského', in 'Dr. Vacovský', *Slováci a Mad'ari*, p. 113-123.

‘Slovak autonomy’ meant as a political program. The campaign of the Slovak People’s Party in 1919, based on *samobytnosť* - the individuality or the distinctiveness of the Slovak nation in the new Czecho-Slovak state – also drew upon the distinction made between ‘the Czech lands’ and ‘Slovakia’ set out in the Pittsburgh Agreement.¹⁶² As the radical, People’s Party politician Karol Sidor put it, the Pittsburgh Agreement presented the goal of Slovak autonomy in ‘a more concrete form’ than the leaders of the People Party had managed to express in Slovakia before the summer of 1919.¹⁶³ It was a constitutional document whose meaning was clear enough to be used in a popular political campaign by the People’s Party, as undertaken before the first parliamentary elections in Slovakia in April 1920.

The Pittsburgh Agreement took on greater significance because the wartime leader of the Czecho-Slovak independence movement, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, had signed the document. That Masaryk became President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic in November 1918 only added to the case that the Czecho-Slovak government had undertaken a commitment to deliver Slovak autonomy within the new state. Jozef Hušek declared in *Jednota* on 1 January 1919 that Masaryk ‘had provided a freely written ‘guarantee’ that Slovakia would receive autonomy in the new state in the Pittsburgh Agreement: a claim that was also upheld by the Slovak League’s more moderate supporter of autonomy, President Albert Mamatey.¹⁶⁴ A conference was held, at Geneva on 11 November 1918, between the largely Czech political leadership in Prague and Masaryk’s Czechoslovak National Council, which accepted the validity of wartime political agreements made by Masaryk’s Council in

¹⁶² V. S. Mamatey, ‘The Establishment of the Republic’, in V. S. Mamatey and R. Luža, *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 9.

¹⁶³ Karol Sidor, quoted in Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie’, p. 83.

¹⁶⁴ *Jednota*, 1 Jan. 1919, p. 4; O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 13, inv. č. 678, poč. č. 27, Albert Mamatey to Vavro Šrobár, Pittsburgh, PA, 22 Nov. 1919, 18/156/18.

exile. Hušek therefore argued that ‘we can trust that Slovakia will have its own parliament and its own government’ within the new state.¹⁶⁵ Supporters of autonomy among the Slovak organisations in the United States claimed that the legitimacy of the Pittsburgh Agreement had been further confirmed by Masaryk in one of his first acts as President of the new state. Slovak organisations in the United States presented a calligraphic copy of the original document to Masaryk on 14 November 1918 in Washington D.C., which Masaryk signed on the same day that Masaryk was elected as President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic in Prague.¹⁶⁶ One year later, the Executive Committee of the Slovak League of America partially framed its support for Slovak autonomy on the basis of Masaryk’s signature: alongside its claim that the Slovakia was entitled to autonomy according to the principle of ‘self-determination’, the committee called for Slovak autonomy, ‘as contained in the Agreement’ signed by Masaryk, to be guaranteed in the laws of the new Czecho-Slovak state.¹⁶⁷

Masaryk’s signature gave the Pittsburgh Agreement international significance in the judgment of the Slovak People’s Party leadership. The argument that Masaryk had legally bound the Czecho-Slovak state to deliver autonomy to Slovakia after the war was a crucial incentive for a five-member delegation of the People’s Party, including Andrej Hlinka, to travel to the Paris Peace Conference in August 1919.¹⁶⁸ Lacking documentation from the Czecho-Slovak government to leave for Paris, the party travelled via Poland instead, whose government provided false passports on which they arrived in Paris on 22 September 1919.¹⁶⁹ The Polish assistance given to

¹⁶⁵ Mamatey to Šrobár, 22 Nov. 1919, 18/156/18; Felak, ‘*At The Price of the Republic*’, p. 41.

¹⁶⁶ Mamatey to Šrobár, 22 Nov. 1919, 18/156/18.

¹⁶⁷ The committee statement used the Czech word *obsažené* rather than the Slovak *obsiahnuté*. *Jednota*, 29 Oct. 1919, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ Kucík, ‘Príspevok Slovenskej Lígy’, p. 80.

¹⁶⁹ Felak, ‘*At The Price of the Republic*’, p. 27.

Hlinka's delegation formed part of a wider diplomatic struggle between Czecho-Slovakia and the Polish state, which had set out competing claims to the economically vital coal-mining district of Těšín/Cieszyn at the Paris Peace Conference.¹⁷⁰ The aim of the People's Party delegation was to place the Pittsburgh Agreement before the Allied Council of Four and to argue that the Czecho-Slovak state should be bound to its supposed guarantee of Slovak autonomy, and also that Slovaks ought to be included as a minority nationality, whose rights would therefore be safeguarded by the minority nationality treaties that each central and eastern European state was compelled to sign after the First World War.¹⁷¹ The Pittsburgh Agreement, by virtue of Masaryk's signature, provided the budding Slovak autonomist movement with a potentially crucial card to play among the Great Powers at the Paris Peace Conference. It took their cause beyond the claim to 'national self-determination' - which of itself would have done little more than exasperate Allied diplomats and leaders in Paris during the course of 1919, who were swamped with such claims and counter-claims – and instead proffered the argument of a written, almost legal commitment.¹⁷² The attempt of the Slovak autonomist delegation to place the Pittsburgh Agreement before the Allied Council of Four was, however, unsuccessful; the partnership of the Czecho-Slovak Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš

¹⁷⁰ Getting, 'Hungarian Attempts to Regain Slovakia', f. 281; On the Těšín/Cieszyn issue see D. Perman, *The Shaping of the Czechoslovak State: Diplomatic History of the Boundaries of Czechoslovakia*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962, p. 244-246; M. Jesenský, 'Between Realpolitik and Idealism: The Slovak-Polish Border, 1918-1947', (University of Ottawa, PhD thesis, 2012), f. 82-83.

¹⁷¹ Felak, 'At The Price of the Republic', p. 27.

¹⁷² See V. Prott, *The Politics of Self-Determination: Remaking Territories and National Identities in Europe, 1917-1923*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 4; A. Sharp, 'Holding up the Flag of Britain... With Sustained Vigour and Brilliance or 'Sowing the Seeds of Disaster'? Lloyd George and Balfour at the Paris Peace Conference', in M. Dockrill and J. Fisher (eds.), *The Paris Peace Conference: Peace Without Victory?*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, p. 45-46.

with French diplomats isolated the Slovak autonomist delegation, to prevent a potentially embarrassing episode for the French ally in central and eastern Europe.¹⁷³

The decision to travel to the Paris Peace Conference marked a significant change in the relationship between the Slovak People's Party and the Czecho-Slovak state. News of the Slovak autonomist delegation's appeal for international support in Paris, with the aid of the Polish government, triggered an understandable political scandal in Czecho-Slovakia. The Club of Slovak Politicians in Prague quickly disavowed the conduct of the People's Party delegation, and unanimously voted to strip Hlinka and František Jehlička of their mandates to sit in the Slovak Club as part of the Czecho-Slovak National Assembly.¹⁷⁴ Not only had the Slovak autonomist delegation undermined the diplomatic position of the Czecho-Slovak state, its leaders had claimed to represent the will of the Slovak nation: a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the Slovak Club. On 12 October 1919, Hlinka was arrested upon his return to Czecho-Slovakia on charges of treason. He was imprisoned in a castle in Moravia until after the Slovak elections in April 1920: a predicament that did not prevent Hlinka from winning a seat in the new National Assembly.¹⁷⁵ Historians such as Vaclav Beneš have contended that the decision to imprison the People's Party leader was a 'mistake' by the Czecho-Slovak authorities. For Hlinka's imprisonment by the new Czecho-Slovak regime, following the priest's famous conviction by the Hungarian authorities for incitement after the Černova massacre of 1907, only added

¹⁷³ P. S. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies: Franco-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1962, p. 74.

¹⁷⁴ Fond KSP, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 286-7 'Záležitosti týkajúce sa cesty Andreja Hlinku na Mierovú konferenciu v Paríži, 9.9.1919-5.11.1919: Osvedčenie Klubu slovenských poslancov', Prague, 9 Sep. 1919, f. 100; Ibid., 'Osvedčenie Klubu slovenských poslancov', Prague, 8 Oct. 1919, f. 114.

¹⁷⁵ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 277; SNA, O. F. Andrej Hlinka, č. šk. 5, inv. č. 800, poč. č. 16, Andrej Hlinka to Ferko Skýčak, Brodek, 27 Dec. 1919, f. 1.

to the priest's reputation as a 'martyr' for the Slovak nationalist cause, who had now suffered at the hands of two different political regimes.¹⁷⁶

Slovak government officials viewed the flight of Hlinka and the People's Party delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in the same hostile manner as the central Czechoslovak authorities in Prague. Minister Plenipotentiary for Slovakia Vavro Šrobár denounced the Slovak People's Party delegation to Paris in a speech to his regime's county governors and officials, declaring that 'Hlinka and his kind think that it will do to appear, fully uninformed, before foreigners and produce their tittle-tattle about the oppression of the Slovak nation and its hatred for their brother Czechs [...] that for their lying words Slovakia should be separated from their sister territories Bohemia and Moravia. The result of the work of these treasonous sons of Slovakia ended in a perfect fiasco'.¹⁷⁷ One of Šrobár's key advisors in Bratislava, the Slovak American Sokol officer Milan Getting, justified Hlinka's detention on returning to Czechoslovakia by claiming that the priest-politician had 'returned to Slovakia with the firm intention of provoking some kind of 'Černova Incident'[...] so that the world would see how we Slovaks were suffering under the Czech yoke [...] in order to avoid bloodshed, Hlinka was jailed'.¹⁷⁸ The hostility of both Czech and Slovak government officials in the new state towards the People's Party delegation was compounded by the case of František Jehlička, who as one of the delegation members to Paris and a close advisor to Hlinka defected to Budapest in October 1919 and agitated for the territory of Slovakia to be joined to the Hungarian state as 'Upper

¹⁷⁶ V. L. Beneš, 'Czechoslovak Democracy and its Problems, 1918-1920', in Mamatey and Luža, *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic*, p. 86.

¹⁷⁷ O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 605, poč. č. 15 f.+1a., 'Prejav Vavra Šrobára na schôdzu slovenských županov a delegátov v Košiciach, 15 novembra 1919', Košice, 15 Nov. 1919, 28/78/3.

¹⁷⁸ Getting, 'Hungarian Attempts to Regain Slovakia', f. 282.

Hungary' once more.¹⁷⁹ Jehlička continued to produce propaganda to this end with the clandestine support of the Hungarian government into the 1930s, arguing that Slovak leaders ought to 'reject the false doctrine of pan-Slavism' and to support the restoration of Hungary's pre-war borders to form 'a country in which the Slovaks had lived in perfect contentment since its foundation'.¹⁸⁰ The People's Party delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, as well as the exposure of one of its key political advisers as being hostile to the Czecho-Slovak state, greatly undermined the wider Slovak campaign for autonomy in the autumn of 1919.¹⁸¹

The political struggle surrounding Slovak autonomy was not confined to the 'internal' politics of the Czecho-Slovak state or even to the ante-rooms of the Paris Peace Conference, but also involved the important constituency of Slovaks living in the United States. The Pittsburgh-based *Národné Noviny*, for example, noted with disdain in October 1919 that the Slovak political class in Czecho-Slovakia was becoming increasingly divided into separate and rival political parties.¹⁸² Its editor, the pro-autonomist Ivan Bielek, presented his solution: that Slovak organisations in the United States had to engage in the political affairs of the old country, in order 'to protect Slovakia from the political-national catastrophe, which in the current conditions and without the help of the American Slovak must occur'.¹⁸³ A polemic debate developed among the leaders of Slovak American organisations as to how to resolve this 'Slovak Question' after the end of the war. After the annual congress of the Slovak League of America was held in October 1919, the exasperated editorial of

¹⁷⁹ Getting, 'Hungarian Attempts to Regain Slovakia', f. 283; Jehlička, *Father Hlinka's Struggle for Freedom*, p. 30, p. 33; Felak, 'At The Price of the Republic', p. 28.

¹⁸⁰ Jehlička, *Father Hlinka's Struggle for Freedom*, p. 8.

¹⁸¹ V. L. Beneš, 'Czechoslovak Democracy and its Problems', p. 94.

¹⁸² *Národné Noviny*, 2 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

¹⁸³ *Idem*.

a Slovak newspaper commented that ‘nothing is written about in [Slovak] America unless it is about autonomy; we are offered autonomy for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner - and often in between times as well’.¹⁸⁴ The tone of this debate can be best understood by using the Slovak terms of the period. Supporters of the Pittsburgh Agreement argued that granting immediate autonomy for Slovakia would achieve *samospráva* - ‘self-administration or self-rule’.¹⁸⁵ Their critics countered this by arguing that to grant autonomy in the immediate post-war political context to Slovakia would have instead constituted *samovražda*: an act of ‘suicide’ by the Slovak nation.¹⁸⁶

Support for the idea of Slovak autonomy prevailed within most Slovak American organisations. In January 1919, delegates of the largest Slovak American fraternal society, the Catholic Union, resolved at its annual convention that ‘our position was and is that the Slovak nation - Slovakia - should have its own parliament and its own administration - that is should be an autonomous part of the Czechoslovak Republic.’¹⁸⁷ Its weekly *Jednota* newspaper, under the editorship of Jozef Hušek, was prominent in agitation for Slovak autonomy in the second half of 1919.¹⁸⁸ An editorial issued in September 1919 was typical of the newspaper’s agitation, which in this instance linked Slovak autonomy with the wider diplomatic context, asking its readership:

¹⁸⁴ *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Nov. 1919, p. 8.

¹⁸⁵ Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie’, p. 86.

¹⁸⁶ *Idem*.

¹⁸⁷ *Zápisnica Ročnej Schôdza Hlavného Úradu Prvej Katolíckej Slovenskej Jednoty 1919*, p. 63.

¹⁸⁸ *Jednota*, 11 June 1919, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 20 Aug. 1919, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 27 Aug. 1919, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 3 Sep. 1919, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 17 Sep. 1919, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 22 Oct. 1919, p. 4; *Ibid.*, 29. Oct 1919, p. 4.

Are we Slovaks? Are we a nation? If so, we must claim self-determination and autonomy for Slovakia! This right - if we do not wish to entirely relinquish our own [Slovak] individuality - is guaranteed to us by the Versailles Peace treaties and in the constitution of the League of Nations. These rights can therefore only be forfeited if we ourselves choose to renounce them.¹⁸⁹

A further editorial claimed that the main purpose of obtaining autonomy was for Slovaks to ‘retain their own national existence’. The newspaper claimed that the Ministry for Slovakia under Vavro Šrobár served only ‘to demoralise and drive the nation into open revolt’ against Czechoslovak rule.¹⁹⁰ While the language of *Jednota*’s articles was frequently hostile to the actions of the Czecho-Slovak government, it was also couched with appeals that granting Slovak autonomy would be ‘no less in the Czech than the Slovak interest’ within their common state.¹⁹¹ It cited the example of the United States to its Slovak readership living in ‘the strongest and the most internally united republic’ - a feat that *Jednota* attributed to its ‘48 legislatively and administratively self-governing, autonomous states’, comprising an externally unified and powerful country.¹⁹² *Jednota* was joined in its forthright campaign against the perceived centralism of the new Czecho-Slovak state and in favour of Slovak autonomy by the *Denný Hlas* (The Daily Voice) newspaper, which was edited by Ján Pankuch, a Lutheran leader in Cleveland, Ohio, who sat on the executive committee of the Slovak League of America.¹⁹³ The agitation of the Pankuch’s newspaper for Slovak autonomy was so persistent that the Czechoslovak

¹⁸⁹ *Jednota*, 17 Sep. 1919, p. 4.

¹⁹⁰ *Jednota*, 22 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ *Idem*.

¹⁹² *Idem*.

¹⁹³ Stolárik, ‘The Role of the American Slovaks’, f. 21; Mamatey to Šrobár, 22 Nov 1919, 19/156/18; SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 13, inv. č. 681, poč. č. 14, ‘Správy Milana Gettinga ohľadne zaslania tlačiarenských strojov od Slovenskej Lígy, v prílohe výstrižky zo slovenských novín vychádzajúcich v USA’ - Milan Getting to Vavro Šrobár, Perth Amboy, NJ, 21 Jul. 1919, 79/156/18; *Ibid.*, Getting to Šrobár, Perth Amboy, NJ, 1 Aug. 1919, 28/156/18.

government banned its distribution in Slovakia from 1922, recreating attempts of the pre-war Hungarian state to proscribe Slovak American newspapers.¹⁹⁴

The National Slovak Society, by contrast, took both a more diplomatic tone and a more moderate position on the matter of autonomy for Slovakia within the Czechoslovak Republic. In a significant editorial published as ‘The Fight for Autonomy!’, its newspaper *Národné Noviny* claimed that the position of Slovaks in the United States was for ‘gradual autonomy’ to be granted to Slovakia, rather than the immediate implementation of the entire terms of the Pittsburgh Agreement.¹⁹⁵ The editorial called for the full terms of the Pittsburgh Agreement to be ‘institutionally guaranteed, but implemented gradually’ by the Prague government: which meant that a guarantee of autonomy for Slovakia ought to be inserted in new state’s constitution.¹⁹⁶ It called only for the ‘autonomy of schools, administration, the economy and commerce’ to be granted immediately to Slovakia, but did not ask for a separate parliament for Slovakia in the near future.¹⁹⁷ A further editorial published in the following week confirmed its wish ‘for the [Pittsburgh] Agreement to be incarnated in the foundations of the Czechoslovak Republic, but brought to life by degrees according to how the Slovak people develop, as their progression and development gradually merits it’.¹⁹⁸ It is likely that Albert Mamatey, who acted as President of both the National Slovak Society and the Slovak League of America, played a substantial role in tempering the view of the National Slovak Society at this time. Mamatey certainly identified himself as a moderate: in his correspondence with Vavro Šrobár, for example, he described leading autonomists within the migrant

¹⁹⁴ Čulen, *Slovenské časopisy v Amerike*, p. 39.

¹⁹⁵ *Národné Noviny*, 16 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

¹⁹⁶ *Idem*.

¹⁹⁷ *Idem*.

¹⁹⁸ *Národné Noviny*, 23 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

colony such as Pankuch and Hušek as being 'extremists'.¹⁹⁹ He similarly condemned 'extremists' on the opposite side of the debate such as Milan Getting, who were agitating against the principle of Slovak autonomy and for a united Czechoslovak nation and state.²⁰⁰ Mamatey described his own position as being in favour of 'gradual autonomy: when it is no longer a Slovakia in which it would be like giving a razor to a small child'.²⁰¹ Mamatey evidently believed that the Slovak politicians in the old country were not yet ready to govern an autonomous Slovakia without the assistance of the central authorities in Prague. This 'gradualist' position adopted by Mamatey and the National Slovak Society was adopted by smaller but still significant Slovak organisations: including the Slovak Evangelical Union and its newspaper, *Slovenský Hlásnik* (The Slovak Watchman).²⁰² While the major Slovak American organisations therefore supported the premise of the Pittsburgh Agreement and the idea of Slovak autonomy, distinct radical and moderate camps had emerged within the migrant colony on the questions of how and when Slovak autonomy ought to be implemented within the Czecho-Slovak state.

Of central importance in the struggle over Slovak autonomy was the presence of a vocal minority of Slovak American leaders who flatly opposed implementation of the Pittsburgh Agreement. The *New Yorkský Denník*, whose 'free-thinking and Czechoslovak' perspective closely aligned with the attitude of the Šrobár Ministry in Bratislava, emerged as a chief post-war critic of the idea of autonomy for Slovakia.²⁰³ Under its editor Jozef Joščák, who had been removed from a leading role in the

¹⁹⁹ Mamatey to Šrobár, 22 Nov 1919, 19/156/18.

²⁰⁰ Idem.

²⁰¹ 'Ja som tedy "ZA AUTONOMIU" pre Slovensko! Ale postupnú, až vtedy keď by ona nebola Slovensku tým, čím by bola malému decku britva do ruky!', Idem.

²⁰² Getting, 'Přehled českého a slovenského tisku', f. 6.

²⁰³ Ibid., f. 1.

National Slovak Society in a financial scandal before the war, the newspaper became better known for hatchet-jobs against pro-autonomist agitators than for subtle constitutional thought. The *Denník* accused Catholic newspapers like *Jednota* of spreading ‘secret anti-Czechoslovak propaganda’ in calling for autonomy; an accusation denounced in turn as a ‘malicious lie’ by the Catholic organ.²⁰⁴ Mamatey condemned the *Denník* in an open letter for its ‘extreme, impolitic and continuous’ campaign, which insinuated that radical agitators for Slovak autonomy such as Jozef Hušek and Ján Pankuch were ‘traitors’ and ‘Magyarones’, rather than genuine Slovak nationalists who held a different political view.²⁰⁵ The *Denník* further railed against the leadership of Mamatey and other ‘Pittsburghers’, who the newspaper presented as a self-serving elite operating within the National Slovak Society as well as the Slovak League of America.²⁰⁶ The newspaper’s agitation against the Slovak autonomist movement was supplemented by the *Slovenský Sokol*, which was hardly surprising given that one of the leading Czechophile agitators, Milan Getting, was a chief writer for both organs. The Slovak Sokol organisation was firmly committed to the idea of a centralised Czechoslovak state after the war and this editorial position did not change after Getting took up his advisory role to the Ministry for Slovakia in 1919. An editorial of *Slovenský Sokol* in November 1919 suggested that, with regards to autonomy, that ‘our nation finds itself in the same situation as Eve, when she looked upon that fine apple [...] The Magyarones and all those who until now lived off our blood are displaying this fine autonomy to us on an attractive plate, spiced with the Szegedín pepper [Hungarian paprika]’.²⁰⁷ The editorial identified ‘Jews [...]

²⁰⁴ *Jednota*, 26 Feb. 1919, p. 4.

²⁰⁵ *Národné Noviny*, 9 Oct. 1919, p. 1.

²⁰⁶ *Idem*; Mamatey to Šrobár, 22 Nov 1919, 21/156/18.

²⁰⁷ *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Nov. 1919, p. 8.

Magyarone Slovaks and priests' as the chief subversive elements within Slovakia, which it claimed were agitating for autonomy in order to subjugate Slovaks once more under Hungarian rule.²⁰⁸ It hailed 'the other part of the nation, whom we can identify with Adam', who sensibly rejected autonomy since 'despite the apple's beauty, its innards may prove rotten'.²⁰⁹ These supporters of a centralised, Czechoslovak state were described as 'a small bunch of Czechophile extremists' by Mamatey, who sought to combat their agitation and steer the Slovak League away from what he perceived to be an unpopular stance to most Slovaks in the United States.²¹⁰ Their presence was sufficient however to incite extensive polemic debate between Slovak organisations and the journalists in the Slovak press, and offered a natural ally to the Czecho-Slovak regime in its attempts to argue against the idea of Slovak autonomy.

The campaign against Slovak autonomy was also assisted by the Ministry for Slovakia in the old country. Informed of Slovak American agitation for autonomy by advisors like Getting, Minister Plenipotentiary Vavro Šrobár wrote a letter to Albert Mamatey in October 1919 for distribution among his 'brother Slovaks in America' through publication in the Slovak American press.²¹¹ Šrobár argued to this Slovak American audience that the provisions for Slovak autonomy set out in the Pittsburgh Agreement were not necessary to secure Slovak national rights within the new state. The Minister argued that the future for Slovaks was already being secured under the existing system, for 'Slovakia has all Slovak judges, all [Slovak language instructed] schools where Slovaks live as the majority and where they live in the minority they

²⁰⁸ *Slovenský Sokol*, 15 Nov. 1919, p. 8.

²⁰⁹ *Idem*.

²¹⁰ Mamatey to Šrobár, Pittsburgh, PA, 22 Nov 1919, 21/156/18.

²¹¹ *Jednota*, 17 Dec. 1919, p. 1.

are fully or partly Slovak. Slovak is not only the administrative language in Slovakia, but is also a state language for the whole Czechoslovak Republic'.²¹² Šrobár chided Slovak autonomists in the United States for their 'ingratitude' toward the sacrifices that had been made by his administration in modernising Slovakia.²¹³ Šrobár also claimed that providing Slovakia with its own parliament would be dangerous to the dominant position enjoyed by Slovaks in the old country. He argued that the substantial minority populations within Slovakia - Magyar and German-speakers, as well as Jewish and Ruthenian minorities - would leave the political balance of any such Slovak parliament delicately poised. He argued that were an assembly for Slovakia to consist of 300 members, there would be 'together 140 Non-Slovaks and 160 Slovaks', according to the population of each national group in the territory.²¹⁴ Even this precarious national ascendancy for Slovaks in an autonomous parliament was placed into doubt, for Šrobár speculated whether 'the Slovak nation would be awakened after just eight months', or whether many Slovaks would instead vote for candidates who were pro-Hungarian in their political outlook.²¹⁵ Šrobár argued that this threat also posed by the Slovak People's Party: pointing to high-profile defectors from that party like František Jehlička, the Minister Plenipotentiary insinuated that the Catholic, clerical faction could seek to bring Slovakia back into a Hungarian state.²¹⁶

Pre-existing divisions among Slovaks in the United States were compounded by the 'Hlinka affair' of September 1919. While the controversy of the People's

²¹² O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 13, inv. č. 677, poč. č. 20+1f., Vavro Šrobár to Albert Mamatey, Bratislava, 31 Oct. 1919, 153/26/4.

²¹³ *Idem.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 154/26/4.

²¹⁵ *Idem.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 156/26/4.

Party delegation to the Paris Peace Conference had undermined the perceived political reliability of campaigners for autonomy in Slovakia, it had a more damaging impact on the Slovak autonomist cause in the United States. As news of the People's Party delegation to Paris reached the Slovak American press, the migrant colony was visited by two members of the Paris delegation, Jozef Rudinský and Jozef Kubala, who arrived in the United States in October 1919.²¹⁷ They were sent as 'emissaries' of the People's Party, in a decision taken by Hlinka rather than the People's Party leadership in Slovakia, who had provided them with official letters of recommendation sanctioning their activity among the Slovak American community. The purpose of this mission was to build a wider campaign for Slovak autonomy involving both the People's Party in the old country and the bulk of the pro-autonomist Slovak organisations in the United States.²¹⁸ As Hronský has pointed out, however, the mission of the People's Party delegates to America 'did not succeed as well as they had expected'.²¹⁹

The failure of the People's Party delegation to win the support of the entire pro-autonomy camp in the United States was apparent from the outset. Within days of their arrival, *Národné Noviny* declared that it did 'not agree in the slightest with the emissaries', who it accused of 'sowing extreme hatred against everything that is Czech'.²²⁰ Its editor, Ivan Bielek, reiterated the National Slovak Society's stance that autonomy for Slovakia had to be constitutionally guaranteed, but implemented 'in stages' according to the national development of their fellow Slovaks in the Czecho-

²¹⁷ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 278.

²¹⁸ Kucík, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie', p. 88.

²¹⁹ Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*, p. 278.

²²⁰ *Národné Noviny*, 23 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

Slovak state.²²¹ The editorial added for good measure that this process had to take place ‘not without, but with the help of our more developed brother Czechs [...] on a foundation of reciprocal, brotherly understanding’ between Czechs and Slovaks in their joint republic.²²² Bielek nevertheless urged the Slovak League of America to rebuff pressure within the organisation from critics of autonomy, who called for an ‘uncivilised and undemocratic’ attack against the People’s Party delegation: he suggested that Slovak American leaders simply ignore their unwelcome visitors from Czechoslovakia.²²³ A quarterly meeting of the Slovak League’s executive committee on 24 October 1919 was tasked with determining the Slovak League’s response to the People’s Party delegation to the United States.²²⁴ Both People’s Party ‘emissaries’, Rudinský and Kubala, were also present at the meeting, and later claimed to have been ‘interrogated’ about their agenda in the United States and the political programme of the People’s Party.²²⁵ The committee meeting was an unsurprisingly stormy affair that lasted two full days.²²⁶ The committee restated the Slovak League’s demand for autonomy for Slovakia on the basis of ‘the freedom of self-determination’, and called for ‘a guarantee’ to be inserted into the Czecho-Slovak state constitution ‘as contained in the document between President Masaryk and ourselves’ (a reference to the Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918).²²⁷ This resolution was forwarded to the Czecho-Slovak government as well as to the Club of Slovak Politicians in Prague. A similarly worded declaration was passed within the

²²¹ *Národné Noviny*, 23 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

²²² *Idem*.

²²³ *Idem*.

²²⁴ Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie’, p. 87.

²²⁵ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 13, inv. č. 678 poč. č. 27, Jozef Rudinský and Jozef Kubala to Združenie Slovenských Katolíkov, Cleveland, OH, 14 Nov. 1919, f. 1.

²²⁶ *Jednota*, 29 Oct. 1919, p. 4-5.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Czechoslovak National Council in America, as drafted by its Slovak representatives without the intervention of Czech American counterparts.²²⁸ Some historical accounts have cited this as a firm demonstration of Slovak American demands for autonomy, that the Czecho-Slovak National Assembly subsequently ‘took no notice of’ when establishing a centralised state.²²⁹ Yet as Štefan Kucík points out, the radical faction of autonomists within the Slovak League, centred upon Ján Pankuch and Jozef Hušek, had initially been more ambitious in their goals than to send a written declaration to Prague.²³⁰ Their proposal that the Slovak League should also send another, now formally sanctioned delegation to Slovakia with a copy of the Pittsburgh Agreement – to be used a tool for popular agitation ahead of elections in Slovakia in April 1920 - was defeated at the meeting.²³¹ At the same time the League officially denounced Rudinský and Kubala’s mission to the United States and firmly distanced the League’s stance on autonomy from that of the Slovak People’s Party.

The executive committee of the League declared that:

The programme of the Slovak People’s Party [...] does not lead and cannot lead towards a defence of the autonomy and individuality of the Slovak nation in the Czechoslovak Republic, but leads and must lead in the final outcome towards the secession of Slovakia from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and so to the casting of the Slovak nation under its former and hopeless yoke of the Magyars [...] because it [the People’s Party] demands full and unconditional autonomy to Slovakia immediately, and it propagates this claim on the basis of the utmost hatred, fear and mistrust towards our brother Czechs.²³²

The emissaries of the People’s Party were criticised for working against the interests of Slovaks in the United States, against the Slovak League as an organisation and

²²⁸ Stolárik, ‘The Role of the American Slovaks’, f. 110-11.

²²⁹ Idem.

²³⁰ Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie’, p. 87.

²³¹ Idem.

²³² O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 20, inv. č. 933, poč. č. 8, ‘Verejný prehlas a osvedčenie Slovenekj Ligy v Amerike k návšteve Jozefa Rudinského a J. Kobalu v U.S.A., v roku 1919’, Pittsburgh, PA, 24 Oct. 1919, 5/31/3.

‘against a gradual but institutionally secured autonomy for Slovakia.’²³³ The collective policy of the Slovak League therefore affirmed the views of the more moderate of the two camps supporting Slovak autonomy: it backed the gradualist interpretation held by Mamatey and the National Slovak Society against the more radical agitation of Pankuch, Hušek and the leading Slovak Catholic organisations.

The moderate stance adopted by the Slovak League was determined to a considerable degree by the agitation of the anti-autonomist minority within the Slovak American organisations.²³⁴ A letter was discussed at the meeting that had been written by Klement Ihriský, owner of the anti-autonomist *New Yorkský Denník* and chairman of the Slovak League’s regional organisation for New York. Ihriský’s letter expressed the New York branch’s ‘disgruntlement’ with radical agitation for autonomy, which it claimed had been supported by senior officials of the Slovak League such as Pankuch and Hušek.²³⁵ Crucially, the letter then declared that the New York branch of the Slovak League would secede from the nationwide organisation, unless it received ‘assurances’ that the Slovak League was not planning a radical campaign in favour of Slovak autonomy.²³⁶ The tactic was denounced by opponents like Hušek as ‘blackmail’, but the threat was well-timed and proved to be effective in curbing any radical declaration for immediate autonomy for Slovakia being made by the Slovak League at this crucial meeting.²³⁷ The secession of a major regional branch of the League would have defeated the chief purpose of the Slovak League of America: to act as an umbrella body representing all Slovak organisations and Slovak nationalist views within the United States. The intervention of the leaders

²³³ ‘Verejný prehlas a osvedčenie Slovenekj Ligy v Amerike’, 5/31/5.

²³⁴ Kucík, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie’, p. 87.

²³⁵ *Jednota*, 29 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

²³⁶ *Idem*.

²³⁷ *Idem*.

of the New York colony helped moderates such as Mamatey to win the debate in the League's executive committee: for it was argued that to pursue a radical campaign for autonomy would have led to a disruption of the 'saintly peace' within the Slovak League, and a potential schism of the Slovak national movement in the United States.²³⁸ This defeat of the radical camp was felt at the time: Jozef Hušek claimed that he and his fellow radical autonomist leaders had 'brought a sacrifice to the altar of national co-operation' by accepting the gradualist stance adopted by the Slovak League regarding Slovak autonomy and by signing the League's denunciation of the People's Party delegation to the United States.²³⁹ Rather than demonstrating a unity of purpose, the declaration of the Slovak League in October 1919 exposed the reality that Slovak autonomy was an increasingly divisive issue for its member organisations.

The Slovak League of America's declaration in favour of gradually implemented autonomy for Slovakia aimed to hold together the coalition of Slovak organisations in the United States. Instead, it brought about a more significant schism between the League and its radical autonomist faction. The People's Party delegation, while officially denounced by the League, received a platform to agitate for immediate autonomy in Jozef Hušek's *Jednota* newspaper. Hušek criticised the Slovak League's attitude towards the delegates in declaring that 'the goal of their mission here is to work for the programme of the League [autonomy for Slovakia] [...] the People's Party has adopted the programme of the League and is actively working towards it'.²⁴⁰ Jozef Rudinský's account of his 'trial' at the hands of the executive committee of the Slovak League was published in the same issue, in which

²³⁸ *Jednota*, 29 Oct. 1919, p. 4; Kucík, 'Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Autonomie Hnutie', p. 87.

²³⁹ *Jednota*, 29 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

²⁴⁰ *Jednota*, 5 Nov. 1919, p. 4.

the People's Party delegate declared that 'the People's Party - who were the only ones to fight faithfully from the beginning for the autonomy of Slovakia - sent our delegation to the United States in order to warn our brothers [...] that our right to self-determination and self-government is in grave peril in the Czechoslovak Republic'.²⁴¹ In articles for Hušek's newspaper over December 1919, Rudinský distanced the People's Party delegation from its renegade member František Jehlička and countered the alleged 'lies' that had been disseminated by Vavro Šrobár in his open letter to Slovaks in the United States.²⁴² Rudinský also called for 'conciliation' between Slovak Catholics in the United States and 'sound-minded Lutherans' who also stood for 'the unconditional preservation of Slovak individuality'.²⁴³ This suggestion of a cross-denominational effort was made in the context of attempts by the People's Party delegation to gain the support of Ján Pankuch, a prominent Lutheran editor who also called for immediate and unconditional Slovak autonomy; Rudinský failed however to elicit sufficient goodwill for his article on Andrej Hlinka to be published in Pankuch's *Denný Hlas* newspaper.²⁴⁴

While agitating for immediate Slovak autonomy among Slovak American groups, Rudinský and Kubala were charged with treason by the Czechoslovak government for participating in the ill-fated People's Party delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.²⁴⁵ The indictment also threatened Slovaks in the United States who assisted the cause of Rudinský and Kubala with prosecution on their own arrival in Slovakia for 'collaborating with an enemy'.²⁴⁶ This threat failed to deter

²⁴¹ *Jednota*, 5 Nov. 1919, p. 4.

²⁴² *Jednota*, 17 Dec. 1919, p. 4-5; *Jednota*, 31 Dec. 1919, p. 4.

²⁴³ *Jednota*, 31 Dec. 1919, p. 4-5.

²⁴⁴ *Idem*.

²⁴⁵ *Jednota*, 21 Jan. 1920, p. 1.

²⁴⁶ *Idem*.

radical Slovak autonomists in the United States from backing the cause of the delegates though. Jozef Hušek declared melodramatically in his *Jednota* editorial that the Czechoslovak indictment meant that ‘Slovaks are not allowed to work for, speak, write or think about autonomy for Slovakia’ and rejected the charges of treason against the delegates.²⁴⁷ The election manifesto of the Slovak People’s Party - rejected by the Slovak League of America as being likely to place ‘the Slovak nation under its former and hopeless yoke of the Magyars’ in October 1919 - was instead taken up with increasing enthusiasm by the Catholic Union fraternal organisation. Its chairman, Andrej Pirhalla, expressed the Catholic Union’s dissatisfaction with the Slovak League in December 1919 by declaring that ‘we Slovak Catholics are fighting for autonomy. We fought for that in the League. And once it was established that the administration of the League was not sincerely in favour of autonomy for Slovakia, the cause reverberates among ourselves alone’.²⁴⁸ On 19 January 1920, the People’s Party delegates were given the opportunity to place their views on the political and social conditions of Slovakia before the Catholic Union’s annual convention.²⁴⁹ Their cause was then taken up by Hušek in his speech to the convention, in which he declared that:

We cannot agree with the mission to Paris of Hlinka and his associates, but we must also be clear that the campaign against the People’s Party and its followers is being meted out not only against this political party, but against Slovak Catholicism itself; that Slovak Catholicism should be discredited and pilloried as an impure, traitorous element [within the Czechoslovak Republic].²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ *Jednota*, 21 Jan. 1920, p. 1.

²⁴⁸ *Jednota*, 10 Dec. 1919, p. 4.

²⁴⁹ IHRCA, Slovak Periodicals, Box SLK-18, ‘Periodicals FI-ZA’, *Zápisnica Ročnej Schôdza Hlavného Úradu Prvej Katolíckej Slovenskej Jednoty, v dňoch od 19-22 januára 1920, v Clevelande OH*, Middletown, PA: Tlačou Jednoty, 1920, p. 94.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

A meeting of the Catholic Union's officeholders on 22 January 1920 confirmed the final break between its stance and that of the Slovak League: the fraternal organisation declared that it would 'morally and materially support' the mission of the People's Party delegates in the United States, citing the Catholic Union's assent to their goals of 'religious freedom and the autonomy of Slovakia, within the framework of the Czecho-Slovak Republic'.²⁵¹ Its convention also sent a telegram to President Masaryk in Prague, in which the fraternal organisation 'begged' the Czechoslovak leader to 'set free Father Hlinka'.²⁵² The Catholic Union had moved decisively away from the collective stance of the Slovak League and instead embraced the position of the People's Party. The stance of the People's Party on Slovak autonomy as well as their wider political platform as a clerical, Catholic party appealed to the leadership of the leading Slovak Catholic organisation in the United States and gained their formal support ahead of the forthcoming elections held in Slovakia in 1920.

The breach between Catholic organisations and the Slovak League over the question of autonomy undermined the basis of the League as the umbrella organisation for Slovak national movement in the United States. In February 1919, Catholic leaders in the United States reformed their pre-war umbrella organisation, the Association of Slovak Catholics (*Združenie Slovenských Katolíkov*).²⁵³ Over forty priests, ten Slovak newspapers and each of the major Catholic fraternal and social organisations were represented at the Association's convention in December 1919: indicating the extent of the organisation's attempt to bring together every aspect of

²⁵¹ *Zápisnica Ročnej Schôdza Hlavného Úradu Prvej Katolíckej Slovenskej Jednoty, v dňoch od 19-22 januára 1920*, p. 113.

²⁵² *Idem*.

²⁵³ *Jednota*, 26 Feb. 1919, p. 1.

Slovak Catholicism in the United States.²⁵⁴ Its new articles of association included the provision of a paid membership of fifty cents per head as well as the creation of an official newspaper *Dobrý Pastier* (The Good Shepherd), which served to defend the interests of the organisation.²⁵⁵ The Association declared that ‘the time has come for all Catholics living here and in the old country to organise into one strong body, in order to successfully defend their Catholic point of view’.²⁵⁶

The Association of Slovak Catholics did not initially challenge the position of the Slovak League: indeed its opening debate centred upon the need for the organisation to avoid ‘harming the national unity’ of Slovak organisations within the League.²⁵⁷ Its founding members and officials therefore vowed to screen new members to the Association to prevent ‘Magyarones using it to tear apart the nation’.²⁵⁸ As the Catholic Union moved however towards a radical stance in opposition to the League, the Association of Slovak Catholics also became an increasingly assertive rival organisation to the Slovak League. The People’s Party delegates, Jozef Rudinský and Jozef Kubala, extended an invite to the Association’s ‘sons and daughters of our common mother, the Catholic Church’ to a meeting in Pittsburgh on 20 November 1919, at which the delegates set out their case for Slovak autonomy.²⁵⁹ A meeting of Slovak priests was also held in the same week by the pro-autonomist priest Jozef Ďúlik. The outcome of both meetings was described by *Jednota* as ‘placing the foundations for a broad and energetic campaign of agitation

²⁵⁴ *Jednota*, 31 Dec. 1919, p. 5.

²⁵⁵ *Jednota*, 5 Mar. 1919, p. 1.

²⁵⁶ *Jednota*, 2 Apr. 1919, p. 1.

²⁵⁷ *Jednota*, 26 Feb. 1919, p. 1.

²⁵⁸ *Idem*.

²⁵⁹ Jozef Rudinský and Jozef Kubala to Združenie Slovenských Katolíkov, 14 Nov. 1919, f. 1.

for autonomy [...] within the framework of the Czechoslovak Republic'.²⁶⁰ Slovak Catholic organisations collectively agreed to set up a 'Catholic press fund', which would be used to support the publication of the People's Party newspaper, *Slovák*, as well as other Catholic newspapers in the old country.²⁶¹ The annual convention of the Association of Slovak Catholics resolved that the organisation 'should endeavour to ensure that the [Pittsburgh] Agreement [...] is incarnated within the peace treaties'.²⁶² This campaign was not successful, but it showed that the leading Catholic organisation in the United States supported the political strategy of the People's Party and was pursuing a different aim from the official programme of 'gradual autonomy' pursued by the Slovak League of America. Tellingly, the Association of Slovak Catholics was now described by leading figures like Jozef Hušek as 'the only representative of the true Slovak national ideal in America' – a stance that challenged the commitment of the Slovak League to that goal.²⁶³ The organisation denounced the position of gradual autonomy for Slovakia and declared that the Slovak League of America had 'ceased to be a moral and official representative of the Slovak colony'.²⁶⁴ The schism was then visibly demonstrated by the refusal of several Catholic organisations to send delegates to the Slovak League's annual convention in June 1920, claiming that the League's policies were acting against their cause of achieving autonomy for Slovakia.²⁶⁵ Slovak autonomy not only exacerbated factional conflicts that had already existed within the Slovak League, but held sufficient force

²⁶⁰ *Jednota*, 26 Nov. 1919, p. 4.

²⁶¹ *Jednota*, 26 Nov. 1919, p. 1.

²⁶² *Jednota*, 31 Dec. 1919, p. 5.

²⁶³ *Jednota*, 7 Jan. 1920, p. 4.

²⁶⁴ Kucík, 'Príspevok Slovenskej Lígy', p. 81.

²⁶⁵ *Idem*.

as an ideology for its advocates to build the Association of Slovak Catholics as a rival body to the Slovak League in order to fight a more radical campaign.

The struggle to attain Slovak autonomy within the First Czechoslovak Republic brought about a significant schism within the Slovak national movement on both sides of the Atlantic. The significant minority of Slovak American journalists and officials who opposed autonomy played a crucial role in the establishment of an administration that was loyal to Prague in Slovakia, while countering radical agitation for immediate Slovak autonomy by the Slovak People's Party and radical Slovak American leaders like Jozef Hušek and Ján Pankuch. While most Slovak leaders in the United States supported the principles of the Pittsburgh Agreement being implemented in the Czecho-Slovak state, they were crucially split as to how that outcome was to be achieved. Moderate voices prevailed within the National Slovak Society as well as in the Slovak League of America, who both called for an autonomous Slovak administration and parliament to be guaranteed by the Czecho-Slovak constitution, but set up at a later date rather than immediately, and to be granted their powers on a gradual basis. The Slovak League of America lobbied the Club of Slovak Politicians in Prague to insist on a constitutional guarantee for Slovak autonomy within the constitution of the First Czechoslovak Republic, but Slovak Club delegates ratified the document without any such provisions in February 1920.²⁶⁶ To a degree, these Slovak American leaders like Albert Mamatey shared the view of some Slovak politicians in the Czecho-Slovak state, who felt that Slovakia was not yet ready for full powers. Under Mamatey's leadership until the end of 1920, the Slovak League did not lend material support to the cause of the Slovak People's

²⁶⁶ Nedelsky, *Defining the Sovereign Community*, p. 73.

Party, the most significant pro-autonomist political party in Slovakia. In contrast, the Association of Slovak Catholics denounced the Slovak League as being no longer representative of the Slovak national cause, and took up the cause of the People's Party and immediate autonomy for Slovakia.

While Slovak groups in the United States were to continue influencing the political debate over autonomy for Slovakia within the interwar Czechoslovak state, they did not do as a single body: as the Slovak League of America had for the most part achieved between its creation in 1907 and the schism over the autonomy question in 1920. As the flow of transatlantic migration trickled to almost nothing between Slovakia and the Slovak American migrant community during the 1920s, the priorities of the Slovak American fraternal societies also turned inward: to win the support (and funds) of second and third generation, Slovak-American migrants. Split over the principle as well as the practice of Slovak autonomy in a new state, and lacking the continuous links to the 'old country' that the vast and repeated pre-war flow of transatlantic Slovak migrants had maintained, the Slovak American migrant colony no longer played an indispensable role in the Slovak national movement. The period of significant, Slovak transatlantic nationalism came to an end, just as the First Czechoslovak Republic came into being: but it had utterly transformed Slovak political nationalism from a powerless fringe movement in Hungary to a defining feature of the administration and electoral politics in a newly consecrated, national homeland of 'Slovakia'.

Conclusion

This dissertation has shown that transatlantic ties were central to the development of Slovak political nationalism. Through intensive flows of people, money and political ideas between Upper Hungary and the United States between 1880 and 1920, the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary was supplemented by the emergence of new Slovak nationalist institutions and leaders in the migrant colony. The creation of a nationalistic Slovak American leadership was not an inevitable - or even a highly likely - outcome of the mass, Slovak-speaking migration that began in the late 1870s. Slovak nationalist historians have largely taken it for granted that the Slovak-speaking colony in the United States would have contributed to the growth of political nationalism in Europe. According to this interpretation, the mere placement of Slovak-speakers in a 'democratic American environment' allowed the migrants to gain 'an enhanced sense of their national individuality' and so influence the nationalist political movement in their homeland.¹ This thesis has shown how contingent the Slovak American contribution to the Slovak national movement was. Migration to the United States was not in itself enough to create a transatlantic national movement. Slovak nationalism first had to be generated among migrants, who lacked any sort of Slovak 'national consciousness'. Only then could this new sense of nationalism be transplanted back to the 'old country' through newly nationalist, Slovak American institutions.

The mass migration of Slovak-speakers from Upper Hungary to the United States had little to do with nationalist political concerns. Slovak nationalist leaders

¹ M. Hronský and M. Pekník, *Martinská deklarácia: cesta slovenskej politiky k vzniku Česko-Slovenska*, Bratislava, VEDA, 2008, p. 47-48.

deplored the mass emigration of Slovak speakers and blamed the Hungarian government for the phenomenon: the argument has nevertheless retained currency among some historians.² Yet, as this thesis has shown, this rhetorically effective account by Slovak nationalist leaders did not relate to the actual concerns and experiences of those who undertook the transatlantic journey. For Slovak-speakers living in the northern and eastern counties of Upper Hungary, seasonal migration to harvest the more intensively farmed lands of the Hungarian plain was already an established economic and social practice before transatlantic migration began.³ It was in these same districts that transatlantic migration became a mass phenomenon: the four north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary accounted for the bulk of Slovak-speaking migrants to the United States.⁴ The United States largely supplemented existing destinations - the Hungarian plains, Lower Austria, as well as Vienna and Budapest - that remained important outlets for migration until the First World War.⁵ Most transatlantic migrants left for the industrial centres of Pittsburgh, Cleveland and the surrounding states, where in 1905 wages for coal mining and steel rolling were roughly five times higher than those for farm work in Hungary.⁶ This gave Slovak-speaking migrants the chance to earn their keep and remit funds to their extended kin

² *Národné Noviny*, 21 Apr. 1900, p. 1; *Národné Noviny*, 2 Dec. 1905, p. 1; P. Pastor, *Hungary Between Wilson and Lenin: The Hungarian Revolution of 1918-19 and the Big Three*, Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1976, p. 9; A. Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918*, London: Longman, 1989, p. 217.

³ J. Puskás (trans. M. Bales and E. Pálmai), *From Hungary to the United States, (1880-1914)*, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982, p. 58.

⁴ M. M. Stólarik, 'Slovak Immigrants Come to Terms with Religious Diversity in North America', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 96: 1 (Jan. 2010), p. 57; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Racial Problems in Hungary*, London: Archibald and Constable, 1908, p. 11.

⁵ C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors: The Treaty of Trianon and its Consequences, 1919-1937*, 2nd Ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 80-81; J. Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987, p. 44; Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, p. 58.

⁶ J. R. Commons, 'Racial Composition of the American People', *The Chautauquan; A Weekly Newsmagazine* (1880-1914) (Meadville, PA), 38: 5 (Jan 1904), p. 435; 'Social Conditions in Pittsburg', *The Independent* (1848-1921) (New York), 66: 3138 (21 Jan 1908), p. 154-5.

in the ‘old country’. It also gave them the chance to save considerable sums of money based on a few years of labour. About half of all transatlantic, Slovak-speaking migrants therefore returned to Upper Hungary to buy larger plots of arable land on which to live in greater comfort.⁷

The habitual practice among Slovak-speakers of return - as well as repeat - migration between Upper Hungary and the United States shows that politicised, Slovak nationalist claims of Hungarian ‘repression’, as contrasted with American ‘liberty’ and democracy, evidently did not concern many of these migrants. Although the economic and social causes that led so many Slovak-speaking migrants to leave for the United States – and for roughly half of them to return to Upper Hungary – have been understood by historians of migration, their evidence has been largely neglected by political historians, who have tended to view transatlantic mass migration through the prism of nationalist conflict in Hungary and the wider Habsburg Empire. By using sociological studies conducted within the Slovak-speaking migrant colony in the United States, the accounts and biographies left by early Slovak-speaking migrants, and by using analyses of historians of migration, this thesis demonstrates the clear importance of economic rather than political concerns in the transatlantic migration of Slovak-speakers. The mass, transatlantic migration of Slovak-speakers began in the 1870s, peaked in the 1900s, and was then

⁷ E. A. Steiner, ‘The Slovak and the Pole in America’, *Outlook* (1893-1924) (New York), 73: 10 (7 Mar 1903), p. 558; ‘Interesting Study of Ellis Island Records...’, *New York Times*, 8 Dec 1907, p. SM6; J. R. Commons and W. M. Leiserson, ‘Wage-Earners of Pittsburgh’, in P. U. Kellogg (ed.) *Wage-Earning Pittsburgh - The Pittsburgh Survey: Findings in Six Volumes*, New York: Survey Associates Inc., 1914, p. 118; ‘Table 52: Immigrant Aliens Admitted to the United States, Emigrant Aliens Departed, and Number Departed for every 100 Admitted, Fiscal Years 1908, 1909 and 1910, By Race or People’, *Reports of the Immigration Commission, Volume 3: Statistical Review of Immigration, 1820-1910; Distribution of Immigrants, 1850-1900*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911, p. 383; ‘Table 37 - Number and Per Cent of Immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1899 to 1910 inclusive, Who Had Been in the United States Previously, By Race or People’, *Ibid.*, p. 359.

ended by restrictive migration policies adopted by both the new Czechoslovak state and the United States after 1918, acts confirmed by the (Johnson-Reed) American Immigration Act of 1924 that reduced legal migration from Czechoslovakia to just three thousand individuals per year.⁸ The absence of nationalism from the process of transatlantic migration has a key implication for the early Slovak-speaking migrant colony and for the history of Slovak nationalism. Few ‘nationally-conscious’ Slovaks migrated to the United States during the 1880s, when the institutions of the migrant colony began to form. It was not inevitable that the Slovak American migrant colony would develop into a centre of nationalist agitation abroad: Slovak-speaking migrants could have remained detached from the nationalist concerns of one thousand or so Slovak nationalist intellectuals in Upper Hungary. The transatlantic national movement that developed between Slovak nationalist groups in Upper Hungary and the migrant colony, as has been shown in this work, depended mostly on the type of institutions that were formed by Slovak-speakers in the United States, and the political attitudes that were taken up by migrant leaders and agitated for within the migrant colony.

A sense of common nationality had to be generated among Slovak-speaking migrants in the United States prior to Slovak Americans engaging with and shaping the politics of their homeland national movement. This was a more difficult task than most historians have assumed, for even the standardised, Slovak written language - the underlying justification for Slovak nationalism – was undermined within the migrant colony by the regional variation in mass migration from Upper Hungary. The majority of Slovak-speaking migrants had little experience of standardised

⁸ T. Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World*, New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2016, p. 107.

Slovak, which was based on a script used by Slovak-speakers in central Upper Hungary, rather than the script used in the north-eastern counties of Upper Hungary, where most migrants had come from.⁹ As has been shown in Chapter 3, the specific, regional pattern of Slovak-speaking migration to the United States meant that at least two potential ‘print languages’ existed within the migrant colony during the 1880s: the standardised, Slovak form favoured by nationalists in central Upper Hungary; and the ‘Šariš dialect’, as commonly used in early fraternal organisations and in the content and title of the leading, migrant newspaper *Amerikánszko-Szlovenszké Noviny*.¹⁰ The emergence of a single, dominant ‘print language’ has been understood by theorists of nationalism as being critical to the development of nationalist forms of thought within a given community. Benedict Anderson’s work, for example, has argued that ‘print-language is what invents nationalism, not a particular language per se’; by forming a sense of community from reading and interacting to the same ideas through standard literary forms such as newspapers.¹¹ Anderson’s theoretical explanation of how a sense of nationhood is brought about by nationalist writers and readerships has been highly influential in recent decades. As the claim to Slovak nationhood was primarily based on the idea of Slovaks possessing a common, and ‘national’, written language, the political importance of an alternative print language prevailing within the migrant colony cannot be overstated. Had the ‘Šariš dialect’ prevailed as the chief language of communication among migrants living in the United States, Slovak Americans would not have possessed a shared, print language

⁹ J. Bartl et. al., (trans. D. P. Daniel), *Slovak History: Chronology and Lexicon*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2002, p. 111.

¹⁰ M. M. Stólarik, ‘Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870-1918’, (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1974, f. 141;

¹¹ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd Ed., New York: Verso, 1991, p. 36, p. 44-45, p. 134.

with nationalist protagonists in the ‘old country’. The basis for a sense of common nationhood between the migrant colony and the detached nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary would not have been formed.

While theorists of nationalism such as Anderson have stressed the importance of print language for the development of nationalism, this dissertation also shows how a ‘national’ print language could be chosen among competing forms of language. In the case study of the Slovak American migrant colony, the Slovak ‘national’ language won out in this contest chiefly due to the efforts of a tiny elite of influential and nationalistic leaders within the migrant colony, who promoted the standardised Slovak form at the expense of the more familiar dialects. Peter Rovnianek’s critical decision to rename and print the leading migrant newspaper in the standardised Slovak form in 1889 began a process by which the ‘Šariš dialect’ was consciously removed as a print language within the institutions of the migrant colony.¹² Both Rovnianek and the prominent Slovak nationalist priest Štefan Furdek placed the standardised Slovak language at the centre of the economic and social institutions of the migrant colony, by using it within the nationwide secular and Catholic fraternal societies that they founded in 1890.¹³ Through the conscious decisions made by these leaders, together with a tiny group of like-minded fraternal society officers, priests and journalists, the Slovak American press and fraternal societies were co-opted as institutions that established a common tie of language between migrants and the Slovak nationalist leadership in Upper Hungary. Their

¹² Balch Institute/HSP, ‘National Slovak Society, National Records, 1915-1974. Box 2, Jubilee Book, 50th Anniversary, 2/3’, ‘John Slovenský and the First Slovak Newspaper in America’, *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1940*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlač Narodných Novín, 1940, p. 159; M. M. Stolarík, ‘Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870-1918’, (University of Minnesota, PhD thesis, 1974), f. 143.

¹³ Z. Pavelcová, ‘V Spomienkach na Život a Dielo Ignáca Gessaya (1874-1928)’, in Z. Pavelcová (ed.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 31, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2015, p. 42.

establishment of standardised Slovak as the chief print language among migrants living in the United States was a necessary precondition for the ability of Slovak American institutions to engage with the homeland national movement from the 1890s. The conscious adoption and fostering of the ‘national’ print language within the Slovak American community shows how nationalist leaders played a critical role in establishing basic claims to a common nationhood between this migrant colony and Slovak-speakers of Upper Hungary. The emergence of a coherent, ‘Slovak-American’ community, which served as a crucial base of activity for the Slovak national movement, was therefore a historically contingent outcome that depended on the effective leadership of a small group of dedicated nationalists, rather than being an inevitable expression of common, Slovak ‘national consciousness’ among migrants living in the United States.

The Slovak American migrant colony became a second centre of Slovak nationalist activity in the years before the First World War. Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis show how Slovak American nationalists contributed to the homeland national movement, first through the migrant press and fraternal organisations and then, from 1907, through the Slovak League of America, a nationalist umbrella organisation.¹⁴ From 1901, election campaigns of Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary were made possible by the material and moral support offered by Slovak American organisations abroad.¹⁵ The ‘National Funds’ established by Slovak American fraternal organisations, drawing from the resources of tens of thousands of members, were

¹⁴ AMS, Fond KSZ č. šk. 2, inv. č. 21, porad. č 48, *Stanovy Slovenskej Lígy, utvorenej dňa 26 mája 1907 na Národnom Kongresse v Cleveland, Ohio, Opravené z nariadenis Kongressu odbývaného dňa 5. júla 1909 v Pittsburghu, PA*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlačou Amerického Slavonického Gazeta Publishing Co., [1909], 1jd/16s, f. 3; *Jednota*, 5 June 1907, p. 4; K. Čulen (trans. D. C. Necas), *History of Slovaks in America*, St. Paul, MN: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007, p. 302.

¹⁵ *Národné Noviny*, 15 May 1897, p. 1; Balch Institute/HSP, ‘Jednota (1898-1919, incomp.)’, Box 1 of 1, *Jednota: Katolícky Kalendár 1898*, Cleveland, OH: Tlač Jednoty, 1898, p. 34.

used to sustain the Slovak national intelligentsia in the 'old country' through subsidies and awards.¹⁶ While Slovak American groups initially underwrote a political agenda set by the Slovak National Party (SNP) leadership in Martin, Slovak American nationalists like Peter Rovnianek soon asserted an independent voice for the migrant colony in the Slovak national movement. Under the combined criticism of 'Hlasist' writers in Upper Hungary and Slovak American groups, the SNP abandoned its boycott of parliamentary elections from 1901.¹⁷ Slovak nationalists organised political campaigns across a broader area, with candidates standing and winning seats across western and central Upper Hungary. The Slovak nationalist manifesto was also changed under populist influences in Upper Hungary and the United States, so that it combined appeals to the material interests of voters on issues such as land reform and support for business cooperatives, alongside the more traditional and largely cultural demands for Slovak language rights.¹⁸ While historians such as Owen Johnson have quite convincingly assessed Slovak nationalism in the context of Hungarian political system, its development after 1900 cannot, however, be fully understood without accounting for Slovak American organisations.¹⁹ Slovak American fraternal societies and newspapers made intensive, Slovak nationalist agitation possible by raising tens of thousands of dollars for Slovak nationalist candidates and organisations from the migrant colony with the

¹⁶ Slovak Institute, 'Personalities File, P. V. Rovnianek, 1867-1933', Peter Rovnianek to Štefan Furdek, Pittsburgh, PA, 30 Jan. 1901, f. 1; Balch Institute/HSP, 'National Slovak Society, National Records, 1915-1974. Box 2, Jubilee Book, 50th Anniversary, 2/3', *Pamätnica k Zlatému Jubileu Národného Slovenského Spolku v Spojených štátoch amerických, 1890-1940*, Pittsburgh, PA: Tlač Narodných Novín, 1940, p. 31.

¹⁷ SNA, O. F. Anton Štefánek, č. šk. 22, inv. č. 811, poč. č. 351, 'Hlasizmus IV', A. Štefánek, 'Veci Slovenské', 40/23.

¹⁸ SNA, O. F. Pavol Blaho, č. šk. 39, inv. č. 1498, poč. č. 18, 'Korešpondencia od vedenia Slovenskej Národnej Strany o úlohach strany a práci medzi voličmi - Uzavretie porady Slovenskej Národnej Strany od dňa 11.4.1901', Martin, 11 Apr. 1901, f. 3.

¹⁹ O. V. Johnson, 'Losing Faith: The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle, 1906-1914', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 22 (Jan. 1998), pp. 293-312.

twin slogans ‘for universal suffrage’ and ‘for our Slovak language’.²⁰ Slovak American organisations even took the lead among Slovak nationalists in agitating for their cause in the eastern counties of Upper Hungary, from where the bulk of these migrants had come. From 1903, Slovak American fraternal societies gave preferential support to Slovak writers and student scholarships from the eastern counties of Upper Hungary.²¹ In 1906, the ‘Central Slovak National Committee’, based in New York, funded nationalist candidates standing in the eastern county of Šariš, and distributed Slovak-language, nationalist newspapers to eastern Upper Hungary, extending Slovak nationalist agitation to this region for the first time.²² The conscious efforts of Slovak American groups to foster Slovak ‘national consciousness’ in eastern Upper Hungary presents an intriguing topic for future studies of how Slovak nationalism developed in this largely overlooked region.

Slovak nationalism was marked by increasing factional conflict between competing forms of nationalist thought on the eve of the First World War. This was exacerbated by the depth of transatlantic contacts between these groups. On the eve of the First World War, the progressive ‘Hlasist’ movement in Upper Hungary was joined by Slovak social democrats in representing the political Left within this broadened Slovak national movement.²³ At the same time, Slovak nationalism became tied to denominational form of religious belief through the political mobilisation of Slovak Catholics. Acting first within the Slovak National Party and then as the independent, Slovak People’s Party, clerical, Catholic politicians like

²⁰ L. Tajták, ‘Americkí Slováci a Slovenské Národné Hnutie do Rozpadu Monarchie’, in Bajaník and Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 25, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2008, p. 27.

²¹ Idem.

²² A. Špiesz and D. Čaplovič, *Illustrated Slovak History: A Struggle for Sovereignty in Central Europe*, Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2006, p. 162.

²³ SNA, O. F. Matúš Dula, č. šk. 9, inv. č. 206, poč. č. 81, ‘Zápisnica z porady členov slovenského národného strany a sociálneho demokratického strany v Budapesti, 26.5.1914’, Budapest, 25 May 1914, 174/9.

Ferdiš Juriga and Andrej Hlinka combined nationalist demands for Slovak language and political rights with their commitment to maintaining the status of the Catholic Church against its anticlerical and socialist critics within Hungary. Slovak nationalism was beset by internal and increasingly bitter disputes between these rival factions, which were exacerbated by the collective defeat of Slovak nationalists at the 1910 Hungarian election. Chapter 5 of this dissertation shows how these divisions among Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary were reinforced by already existing organisational and ideological disputes among Slovak American groups. The Slovak Sokol gymnastic organisation, based almost exclusively on Slovaks living in the United States, upheld the politically liberal, and at times anticlerical, sentiments of the 'Hlasist' faction on the other side of the Atlantic. Its officers, such as Milan Getting, played a prominent role in the nationalist politics of the migrant colony and in assisting the projects of 'Hlasist' politicians in Upper Hungary, including the parliamentarian Pavol Blaho's high-profile lecture tour in the United States to win funds and support for Slovak-language schools in Moravia.²⁴ In the case of the much smaller Slovak socialist movement, its leadership in Upper Hungary played the chief role in setting up a counterpart socialist press and organisations on the other side of the Atlantic.²⁵ The Catholic Union fraternal society and its *Jednota* newspaper in the United States also formed a ready constituency for the idea of defending the status of 'God and the Slovak nation' as set out by clerical nationalists in Upper Hungary. Transatlantic links between Catholic politicians and leaders of Catholic migrant organisations were forged in the context of the 'Černová Massacre' of 1907, that

²⁴ SNA, O. F. Vavro Šrobár, č. šk. 20, inv. č. 932, poč č. 17, 'Zápisnica štvrťročného schôdzy hlavného úradu Slovenskej Lígy', Pittsburgh, PA, 30 May 1913, 8/8/1.

²⁵ K. Čulen, *Slovenské Časopisy v Amerike*, Cleveland, OH: First Catholic Slovak Union, 1970, p. 105-106; Balch Institute-HSP, 'National Slovak Society in the U.S.A., Almanac, 1907-1919 (incomp)', Box 2, *Robotnícky Kalendár 1914*, Ružomberok: Ján Párička, 1913, p. 43.

simultaneously contributed to the rise of Andrej Hlinka as a martyr-type, nationalist leader for the Slovak cause.²⁶ The breakaway Slovak People's Party, formed under Hlinka's leadership in 1913, was given moral support by Jozef Hušek and other clerical nationalists in the migrant colony: had war not broken out, they would probably have supported the splinter organisation with the Catholic Union's funds as well.²⁷ Slovak nationalism was transformed before the First World War from a single party movement into a loose coalition of emerging and rival political parties, whose leaders agreed on the rights of the Slovak language but clashed on many other issues, such as the status of religious institutions or how to approach social and economic reform in Upper Hungary. The Slovak American colony served as a significant constituency through which these homeland political factions sought both moral and material support. With the help of the leading fraternal organisation in the United States for example, it was possible for Slovak Catholic politicians to conceive of their faction forming a viable, independent nationalist party in Upper Hungary. While political historians of Slovakia such as James Felak and Owen Johnson have accounted for Slovak nationalist divisions in the final years of the Kingdom of Hungary, their analysis has neglected the transatlantic context in which Slovak nationalist politicians such as Andrej Hlinka or Pavol Blaho operated before the First World War.²⁸ Slovak nationalist leaders were not bidding for influence solely among the limited number of 'nationally conscious' Slovaks in Upper Hungary: the Slovak

²⁶ *Jednota*, 28 Oct. 1908, p. 4; *Jednota*, 6 Jan. 1909, p. 4; SNA, O. F. Andrej Hlinka, č. šk. 2, inv. č. 231, poč. č. 1, Jozef Hušek to Andrej Hlinka, Cleveland, OH, 5 Oct. 1909, f. 1.

²⁷ *Jednota*, 8 Jan. 1913, p. 4; *Jednota*, 6 Aug. 1913, p. 4.

²⁸ J. R. Felak, *'At the Price of the Republic': Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, 1929-1938*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993; Johnson, 'The Slovak-Hungarian Constitutional Struggle', pp. 293-312.

American community provided an alternative and equally significant source of political support.

The transatlantic nature of Slovak nationalism played a crucial role in shaping the political fate of Slovak-speakers living in Hungary after the outbreak of the First World War. Chapter 6 has shown how the Slovak League of America asserted a claim - without much controversy among Slovak nationalists on either side of the Atlantic - to assert nationalist political and territorial claims on behalf of their countrymen in Europe for the duration of the war.²⁹ While the Slovak national movement in Upper Hungary adopted a passive stance, declared its patriotic support for the war effort of Austria-Hungary and awaited events, the Slovak migrant colony acted as an independent centre for Slovak nationalist agitation. After much internal debate, the Slovak League declared the wish of Slovak nation to secede from the Kingdom of Hungary and instead to form an independent, common state with the Czechs, by signing the Cleveland Agreement with Czech American counterparts on 22 October 1915.³⁰ Slovak American organisations raised nearly \$700,000 to support the efforts of Masaryk's Czechoslovak National Council to win support for this cause in the capitals of the Entente powers. The migrant colony's agitation, however, formed the only substantial evidence that Masaryk's National Council had to show political support among Slovak nationalists for an independent, Czecho-Slovak state.³¹ With the declaration of Czecho-Slovak statehood on 28 October 1918, the 'Martin Declaration' by which Slovak nationalists in Upper Hungary committed themselves to the common state, and its borders confirmed by the Paris Peace

²⁹ *Národné Noviny*, 30 July 1914, p. 4; SNA, Fond SLA, č. šk. 2, 'Memorandum Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike, vydané menom Slovenskej emigrácie v Spojených Štátoch Amerických', [July 1914], f. 1-2.

³⁰ *Jednota*, 24 Nov. 1915, p. 4.

³¹ Getting, 'Evolution of the Czechoslovak Concept', f. 167; Stolárik, 'Role of American Slovaks', f. 73.

Conference of 1919-1920, Slovaks obtained substantial language and political rights within a recognised national homeland: the territory of 'Slovakia' that forms as an independent state today.

The creation of the Czecho-Slovak state left Slovak nationalists divided over the political rights that Slovakia should receive within the larger, multinational state. In wartime, the Slovak League of America had consistently argued that political autonomy for Slovakia – including its own administration and parliament – within an essentially federal Czecho-Slovak state was their basis for political cooperation with Czech American leaders and Masaryk's National Council.³² This demand was restated in the Pittsburgh Agreement of 31 May 1918 between Slovak and Czech American leaders, and signed by Masaryk himself. The document set out a clear vision of how an autonomous Slovak administration would operate within an Czecho-Slovak state, to the degree that the Slovak People's Party and other supporters of Slovak autonomy adopted the content of the Pittsburgh Agreement as their own constitutional programme in the interwar Czechoslovak state.³³ The emerging campaign for Slovak autonomy by opponents of the liberalising (and perceived to be anticlerical) Ministry for Slovakia under Vavro Šrobár took on a transatlantic form. Many historians have viewed debates over autonomy for Slovakia in the First Czechoslovak Republic as a confrontation between Czechs and Slovaks – or between 'centralist' Prague and the 'national rights' of Slovakia.³⁴ The final

³² *Jednota*, 24 Nov. 1915, p. 4.

³³ Š. Kucík, 'Príspevok Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike k Autonomistickému Hnutiu na Slovensku v Rokoch 1918-1938', in S. Bajaník and V. Dund'urová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 25, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2008, p. 80.

³⁴ J. Korbel, *Twentieth Century Czechoslovakia: The Meanings of Its History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, p. 86-87, p. 101-103, p. 109; E. Bosák, 'Slovaks and Czechs: An Uneasy Existence', in H. G. Skilling (ed.), *Czechoslovakia, 1918-1988: Seventy Years from Independence*. Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991, p. 74-75; S. J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for*

chapter of this thesis has demonstrated, however, that Slovak nationalists were badly split on the topic: the autonomy question brought about a decisive, internal schism within the Slovak national movement on both sides of the Atlantic. The Šrobár Ministry's efforts to establish effective and 'progressive' Czechoslovak state rule in Slovakia were given crucial assistance by key Slovak American advisors within the government. The centralised form of government, ratified in the Czechoslovak Constitution of February 1920, also had ardent supporters among a minority of Slovak American activists, as well as a substantial body of Slovak politicians in the new state. Crucially, supporters of autonomy for Slovakia were themselves divided on whether autonomy ought to be granted immediately or introduced gradually; and whether the Slovak People's Party, in the aftermath of its highly controversial delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, was a desirable political partner for Slovak American groups. Because of this dispute, the Slovak League of America lost its unchallenged status as the political representative of the Slovak American migrant colony: Slovak Catholic organisations broke with the League's 'gradualist' stance on Slovak autonomy to support the People's Party of Andrej Hlinka from 1920.³⁵ The outcome of this last, great polemical debate among Slovak American leaders was a schism within the migrant colony on the issue of autonomy. As the age of mass, transatlantic migration between central and eastern Europe and the United States also ended, the 'Slovak-American' community became subject to assimilationist pressures in the United States. It had greatly diminished contacts with the 'old

Survival. New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1995, p. 151; M. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918-1920*, Bratislava: VEDA, 2001, p. 63.

³⁵ *Jednota*, 7 Jan. 1920, p. 4; 'Príspevok Slovenskej Lígy v Amerike k Autonomistickému Hnutiu na Slovensku v Rokoch 1918-1938', in S. Bajanič and V. Dundúrová-Tapalagová (eds.), *Slováci v Zahraničí*, Vol. 25, Martin: Matica Slovenská, 2008, p. 81.

country' compared to the pre-First World War era. As a result, Slovak American agitation on behalf of their countrymen in the interwar Czechoslovak state took on the form of a more detached 'émigré' community rather than the central base for the national movement that the migrant colony had been since the late nineteenth century.

The development of a transatlantic Slovak national movement in the late nineteenth century as described in this study offers insights into the role of migration in nationalism more generally, including in present-day political movements. The transformation of Slovak nationalism from an idea held by a marginalised group of activists in Upper Hungary to a central political agenda within a national homeland of 'Slovakia' chiefly took place during the age of mass migration of Slovak-speakers between Upper Hungary and the United States. The Slovak American migrant colony served as a second centre of nationalist sentiment and mobilisation, a development that was critical in bringing about the initially improbable outcome of a Slovak national homeland by 1920. While the migrant colony in the United States represented a considerable share of the Slovak-speaking population, it attained its central importance to the national movement owing to the size and wealth of its nationality-based, migrant institutions. Slovak American fraternal organisations were among the largest Slovak organisations on either side of the Atlantic, in terms of both mass membership and financial power. Slovak American political journalism during this period flourished to an extent that was not achieved by the Slovak press in Hungary. The Slovak case study clearly underlines the important role played by human agency in the shaping of political movements, as well as the contingency of historical outcomes. Through the interactions of daily life as well as the conscious

building of national institutions by a small group of influential leaders, the idea of a collective Slovak nationhood gained importance among these migrants only in a foreign land. This study shows that community leaders within a migrant colony could set the terms by which migrants relate to each other, both within the colony and through their political ties to the 'old country'. These opportunities sometimes presented themselves because of chance occurrences. The fire, for example, that consumed the presses of the leading migrant newspaper in 1888 compelled its publishers to seek support from an outside source to rebuild their organ. This chance event brought on board Peter Rovnianek, who could propagate his belief in a common Slovak nationhood and a common Slovak language through this position of influence in Slovak American life over two decades. The course of Slovak political nationalism in Europe was ultimately shaped by such events that took place thousands of miles away, as part of the remarkable story of chance and contingency by which the modern-day, national homeland of 'Slovakia' was established.

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